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No 9

THE DARK SECRET

or Sam Short,
the Boy Snowaway

TO ORDER AND GIVE
BILLIARDS AND COSTUMES,
1401 142nd & 142nd PURCHASE ST.
BOSTON, MASS.



BY

LAUNCE POYNTZ

He was confronted by a small, elfish-looking boy, who had sprung from heaven knew where, and who held out Captain Andrews' own razor over the fingers with which he clutched the gunnel.

BRAVE & BOLD

A Different Complete Story Every Week

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THE DARK SECRET;

OR,

Sam Short, the Boy Stowaway.

By LAUNCE POYNTZ.

CHAPTER I. THE START.

When Captain William A. Andrews sailed from Point of Pines, Boston Harbor, in his little twelve-foot dory, the *Dark Secret*, he did so, in his own words, "to show what can be done with a small, well-constructed boat," and to beat the American record for deeds of apparent foolhardiness, but real courage and calculation. He knew that his voyage, if successful, would be the most wonderful ever known, and that fame and fortune would follow his safe arrival at Queenstown. What he did not know was that he would have a passenger on board, of whom no one ever dreamed.

Captain Andrews took his departure from Boston Harbor on a very memorable day, the eighteenth of June, being the day on which the British fell back from Bunker Hill, after being mowed down by the Americans on the seventeenth. It is also the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, in which the same British got whipped again, by the great Napoleon, till the great-grandfather of the present Kaiser of Germany came to his help, and saved Wellington from being put in a French prison.

The *Dark Secret* was accompanied to the beach by at least twenty thousand people from the suburbs of Boston, according to the reporter of the *New York World*, who wrote up the account; but he was very far under the mark, being a native of New York, and, therefore, jealous of Boston. As a matter of fact, the whole population of Boston turned out to see Andrews sail away, and the light of the sun shone on so many pairs of spectacles that the shore seemed covered with shining stars of light, wherever the beholder looked.

A short description of the captain and his wonderful vessel will not be amiss. She was a lifeboat dory, built in Boston, of half-inch cedar, with air compartments and a hollow keel, shod with two hundred pounds of iron. In the keel were stored forty gallons of water, which could be pumped up when required for drinking purposes, and would give an ample allowance for eighty days. The captain proposed to wash only in the sea, as being more economical. For medicinal and ballasting purposes, he carried a hundred bottles of Apollinaris water, and for food relied on Boston baked beans, canned by a peculiar process, which gives them the real Boston flavor. Fifty pounds of biscuit, eight of corned beef, twenty of canned vegetables, a ham, a can of condensed milk, a cake, a loaf of bread, a jug of molasses, another of vinegar, two boxes of sardines, together with clay pipes, and ten pounds of tobacco, made up the provisions aboard the *Dark Secret*, and the captain thought he had enough to last him all around the world, as long as the beans held out. His contempt for animal food was shown in the fact that one ham and eight pounds of corned beef were all he had aboard, and he had evidently forgotten that coffee is a very comforting thing, or else felt afraid he would not be able to cook it.

This collection of eatables and drinkables—strictly temperance, it may be remarked—occupied a great part of the boat, which was twelve feet, nine inches long, by five feet beam, and two feet deep. In fact, according to the captain's thinking, there was only room for one passenger—himself—and he did not propose to take more. On a former voyage he had crossed the sea with his brother in a nineteen-foot dory, called the *Nautilus*, and they had quarreled

over a game of cribbage so often that the captain swore he never would cross the ocean again, unless he did it alone.

People thought he was crazy when they saw him actually start. Had he been in Canada, and the place of his voyage Niagara Rapids, the police would have arrested him; had he tried to jump the New York bridge, he would have been punished by the ever-vigilant guardians of the great metropolis; but, being outside of Boston limits, there was no police to stop him; and promptly at six o'clock on the evening of Monday, June eighteenth, the people of Point of Pines helped the captain to launch his little vessel from the beach, and he hoisted his lateen sail and set his course for the mouth of the harbor.

A hundred thousand voices shouted good cheer to him, and all the bands of Boston had come out to play "Yankee Doodle," "God Save the Queen," and other patriotic airs; as long as the *Dark Secret* remained in sight.

The little vessel presented a jaunty and reckless appearance in character with her mission as she sailed down the bay. Small as she was, she had been built for safety under any circumstances that might occur in the course of the voyage; decked over securely, with absolutely watertight hatchways, with torpedoes to be exploded for protection against the monsters of the deep, with nautical instruments and books, and with a perfect captain all alone in his glory.

So, at least, Captain William A. Andrews thought on that lovely summer evening, and there was no one to undeceive him as yet.

There he was, in an absolutely unsinkable boat, as he reasoned, with two watertight compartments that would float her under any circumstances, unless both were punctured; and he had plenty to eat and drink on board, according to his frugal Boston notions, to last him across the Atlantic Ocean, if necessary.

As the sun began to dip toward the horizon, and grew red and fiery, Captain Andrews opened the locker in his boat, which was next to the place where he sat to steer. He had had everything arranged especially for his own comfort in that particular place. At ordinary times he sat erect on a bench, and grasped the handle of the tiller; but, by simply pressing a few springs, the partition in front of his knees would give way, and disclose a long, coffin-shaped space, in which the wearied mariner could stretch his legs when he wished to go to sleep, with the tiller-lines fastened around his wrist, so that the gentle tugging of the rudder would enable him to steer while fast asleep, in fine weather; while, as soon as it grew rough, the pulling would awaken him to his duties.

Next to his head was a small locker, which he unlocked as the last rays of the sun cast his shadow on the triangular sail of the *Dark Secret*, showing that night was approaching. Within that locker rested his choicest treasures in all the boat, and from it he now drew forth a short clay pipe, together with a bag of tobacco, from which he filled the bowl of his ancient friend, and proceeded to smoke, thoughtfully casting glances around him as he puffed away, till his thoughts burst forth in audible language.

It was a peculiarity of Captain Andrews that, while extremely taciturn among other people, he had acquired a habit of talking to himself when alone on the sea. A man must have some one to talk to at times, and he was no exception to the rule.

"Well," he said, addressing himself, as if he had been two people in one, "I tell you what it is, Bill, my boy, it's mighty little sleep you'll get, if you don't take it while the weather stays fine. Couldn't have a better night than to-night, if we don't run into any one coming into the harbor. Let's see, where's the Marblehead light?"

The sun had not yet sunk quite deep enough for the lights on

the lighthouses to be visible, but Captain Andrews had sailed out of that bay too often not to recognize every landmark. There on his left, and some distance astern, lay the village of Marblehead, the home of so many renowned people, while on his right, and still lying apparent almost across his path, the low, yellow lines of sand that marked the peninsula of Cape Cod stretched their warning to make no further southing.

The *Dark Secret* had been sailing with a fresh western breeze from six o'clock till sunset, which took place at twenty-five minutes to eight, making, with smooth water, about ten knots an hour. She was, therefore, about fifteen miles from the harbor; and the land, being low, was almost out of sight, save where, as at Marblehead, it arose high and blufflike. The course he had taken had put him out of the way of vessels coming from along the coast, and the *Dark Secret* was all alone on the waters, when the captain distinctly heard the words:

"Say, boss, air we safe to sea yet?"

The passenger on the *Dark Secret* had asserted himself for the first time during the voyage.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOICE.

To say that Captain William A. Andrews was surprised is a mild term for the feelings with which he listened to this mysterious voice.

He had been looking around him, puffing and soliloquizing, when it struck on his ear, coming from the bow of the boat, and he gave a violent start, and burst forth into a nautical exclamation, into which he had fallen as a matter of habit, crying aloud: "Douse my top lights! What in Davy Jones was that 'ere?"

No answer was returned, and the captain, completely mystified, after listening intently for a repetition of the voice, put his pipe back into his mouth, and made the discovery that it had gone out.

"What's that?" he cried, and his voice quavered. "If you're a man, where air you? If you're a ghost, what in the name of Jerushy Solomons do you want?"

When he had spoken, he waited for a full minute, but no answer was returned to any of his questions. Nothing was audible but the wash of the ripples past the sides of the dory, and the sighing of the breeze through the simple rigging of his little craft. The captain stood there in silence for another minute.

"Bill Andrews a-talkin' in his sleep! Well, I swear, if that ain't funny!"

The captain, with his usual courage, had already recovered the balance of his mind, and had reasoned himself into the belief that he must have been sleeping on his feet, by no means an unusual thing among sailors on watch.

So he got down into the well, and opened the locker; after which he hauled out a box of cigars.

He inserted his jack-knife under the lid, forced it open, and beheld, reposing therein the fair forms of some genuine Havana cigars, which, his experienced eye and nose informed him, could not have cost him less than a hundred dollars a thousand. And there were two hundred and fifty in the box. Instantly, with the mathematical habit of the sailor, the gallant captain began to calculate aloud, saying:

"Now, Bill Andrews, let's you and me start fair. Two hundred and fifty gives me and you a cigar each for a hundred and twenty-five days. That's kinder mean allowances, Bill, ain't it? Yes, I agree with you. Let's double it. One after breakfast, dinner, and supper, and one to make the night watch go easier, and keep a man awake. How's that, Bill? That gives four cigars a day for me

and you, two apiece, Bill, for sixty days and a half. We'll throw off the half. Then, as you ain't so much used to smoking as me, Bill, I guess I'll smoke your share, and that'll give one man some comfort. You can take pipes, Bill, you know."

With that he took out a cigar, smelled it lovingly for a moment, and then struck a match and lit it, drawing in his breath with great satisfaction, evinced by a long sigh.

He began smoking lazily, when suddenly something arose out of the water, not fifty feet from the boat, made a great curve in the air, and then dived down into the water again.

The night was clear, and the half moon gave enough light to the solitary mariner to make sure that the strange visitor was not a whale. It was not thick enough through, nor large enough. Moreover, it arose with absolute silence, and dived down again with the same mystery, so that Andrews, for a moment, thought he must have been dreaming again. For the apparition, which had called forth from him his ejaculation, bore the head, as near as he could see, of an enormous serpent, and certainly the body that followed it was that of an eel, magnified to the dimensions of a whale in length.

The appearance of this great creature instantly aroused all of the skill and courage of the intrepid navigator. He had seen something that looked to him very like the great sea serpent which fools deny and sailors see, every now and then. If it should attack his tiny boat, the *Dark Secret* might be destroyed with ease. It was necessary to scare the creature away; and, with that, into the locker went Andrews, and presently fished out a small dynamite cartridge, with a patent fuse, capable of being burned under water. This fuse he lighted, and threw the sputtering missile into the sea, on the exact spot in which the marine monster had dived. It splashed in, and almost instantly afterward came a sharp shock, while a million tongues of flame shot through the water in all directions.

The explosion of the torpedo—for such was the cartridge, in fact and intent—produced a singular effect. The boat trembled like a leaf, and the sea, which had been perfectly smooth, boiled like a pot on the fire, for some feet around where the missile struck. Then the commotion subsided; and up to the top of the water floated a number of fish, with their white bellies upturned to the moonlight, killed by the concussion.

In another minute the monster itself, which had been the cause of the commotion, arose from the surface at some distance away, shaking its head from side to side, writhing to and fro for a length of at least a hundred feet, and then went off at a great rate, swimming away from the vicinity of the boat, as if struck with mortal terror.

The reckless sailor burst into a laugh, as he exclaimed:

"Bill Andrews, if you was to tell that to the folks on shore, they'd call you a liar; but, by Jerushy Solomons! I've seed the cuss, and there ain't no rubbin' that out, and——"

"What's the matter, boss?" cried the mysterious voice that had already startled the bold mariner twice.

This time there was no doubting it. William A. Andrews was wide awake, smoking a cigar. He had just scared away a sea-serpent with a torpedo, and yet there was a human voice addressing him. Some one was on board the *Dark Secret* beside himself.

The moment this thought came to the captain, he jumped up, in a state of great excitement, and shouted:

"Douse my top lights, you skunk! Whoever you be, I'll jist send you overboard when I lay my claws on you—that's what I'll do! Come out of your hole, whoever you be, and let me see the face of you! I'll teach you to come stowin' yourself away in my boat, you varmint!"

As he spoke, he gave a kick to the springs which opened the partitions and afforded space for his legs when he lay down. Convinced that some one must have hidden there, he peered into the narrow recess, and struck a match, with which he inspected it closely.

No one was in there; and, as the captain looked at it, he realized that no one could have hidden there. There was just room for his legs, as far as the waist, to lie straight, and that was all. The recess was a regular funnel, with room for nothing else.

On either side of the sleeping funnel were piled the stores, which filled the rest of the boat, as far as the air compartments, and, as the captain knew, there was hardly an inch of available space on which so much as a rat could have stowed itself away. Nevertheless, Captain Andrews, who was a very determined man, went to work and opened the lockers, took up the hatch that covered the hold, and disturbed nearly half his cargo, hunting for some one stowed in among the bottles of Apollinaris water, bean cans, and other stores. When he had gone down to the very bottom, and replaced all the stores, the brave sailor fastened down the main hatch again, and his face took on a very thoughtful expression, as he remarked:

"Bill Andrews, this is a very queer thing! I'll have to take another smoke, to clear it up. We don't count this fellow."

He had smoked out his first cigar, and took a second, which he smoked through very slowly and carefully, glancing all around the horizon as he smoked, and listening intently to every sound.

It seemed too absurd to him that he should be alone on the ocean, in a twelve-foot dory, and yet hear some one mocking him.

"I do believe, Bill Andrews," he said, at last, after a long pause of gloomy meditation, "you must be a-getting some sort of tobacco jimjams, like the old soakers has from their whiskey. You don't drink, and you never had no trouble afore; but here you are, seeing snakes, when all the big-bugs says there ain't no sich things as a sea-serpent; and now you're a-hearing voices. By the jumping Jerushy Solomons! I've half a mind to think there is something in ghosts, after all. If there be, then what I want to know is, who in the name of Davy Jones wants to haunt me? I never done nobody no wrong, and——"

Here he gave a violent start, as a sudden puff of wind caught the little dory unawares, and caused her to make a jump and heel over, as if under the lash of a whip. He had been so intent, thinking over the mystery of the voice, that he had forgotten to watch the sky, and now, as he looked up, a big black cloud was sweeping right up to the moon, to swallow it, bearing a squall in its bosom.

And, to a twelve-foot dory, squalls are things of importance, which cannot be neglected.

Therefore, William A. Andrews had to work up lively to reduce his lateen sail to a mere rag, by the reefs, before the squall got in on him; and by the time he had done so, it grew pitch-dark, and the sea arose in a manner which made the landscape completely invisible, from the low level of the boat's decks. Captain Andrews was serving his apprenticeship of danger, for the voyage.

To a big ship, the squall would have been nothing; to the dory, it was a tempest. The waves arose to a height of ten or twelve feet, and the dory went up and down, from wave to wave, hiding herself in the trough of the sea, and then catching a view of the lighthouse once more from the summit of the great breakers.

The captain had to maintain his post and keep his iron frame in constant tension, wrestling with the waves, as he held on to the tiller of the dory, so that, for hours, during which the squall lasted, he had no leisure to think of anything else.

During this time the dory made a great deal of way, heading due eastwardly all the time, and when the moon at last made its appearance again, it was only to flit from the bosom of one cloud to another, scudding across the face of the heavens in a manner that showed a stiff nor'wester had set in.

The captain of the *Dark Secret* smiled as he saw it, and began to soliloquize as usual:

"Good for you, Bill Andrews! You always had the luck, didn't you? Here comes a regular winter nor'wester in the middle of summer, as if the clerk of the weather had come out a-purpose for you, to help ye over to the other side. I'm doused if it ain't midnight, or nigh it."

This exclamation was made after inspecting his watch by a glimpse of the moon, and discovering that the hands pointed to some minutes after eleven, showing that more than two hours must have passed in his conflict with the squall.

The sea had gone down somewhat, but the boat rocked like a wild horse, for all that; and, from the position of the lights at Marblehead and over toward Cape Cod, the solitary navigator calculated that he must have run as much as forty or fifty miles already, thanks to the impulse of the squall. In all that time the *Dark Secret* had not shipped a drop of water, but had floated like a cork over the heaving billows, and Andrews patted the gunnel affectionately, saying:

"Dory, there ain't many can beat you for a sea boat, even if you don't show sich a pair of heels as the *Volunteer*, and that like. There ain't brewed the storm that can sink ye, and—holy Jerushy Solomons!"

The exclamation was called forth by a long and dismal groan, and Captain Andrews felt a thrill agitate his stalwart frame, while the sweat started from every pore.

He had forgotten all about the voice in the excitement of the squall, but the moment a period of comparative peace returned the mysterious voice returned with it, and this time in a more terrifying form than at first.

Captain Andrews listened intently, and the groaning continued, but in no place that he could locate it. Now it seemed to come from one side of the dory, now from the other—and again from the sea itself. Presently he called out:

"Where are you? What's the matter with you? Where in the world have you hidden?"

Instantly the groans ceased, and a dead silence followed, which lasted for hour after hour, during which the dory ran on through a chopping sea, urged by a brisk gale that sent her along at a furious rate, while Andrews kept his seat by the tiller and steered her on, letting out a reef, till the little vessel seemed fairly to fly.

It was just the weather the *Dark Secret* loved, for she was nothing if not a seaboat, and never boasted of extraordinary speed.

On flew the boat, and on flew the scud clouds above her, driving over the face of the moon, hour after hour. The groans ceased entirely, and, insensibly to himself, Andrews waxed sleepy, and prepared for the night, according to his calculations.

Thrusting his legs down the narrow, coffin-like funnel, he pulled out from the bench on which he had been sitting a couple of supports, which at once let it down and converted it into a sloping backboard, against which he could rest his back and lie there with the rudder lines in his hand, steering by instinct while fast asleep, so completely had he become accustomed to the management of a boat like this.

In fact, the captain had been pretty hard at work all day, and as the night came on grew more and more sleepy, till he could no longer hold his eyes open, when he went fast asleep, snoring

with the noise of a distant bull, and completely oblivious of all things but the rudder.

It was just the sort of night in which he could do such a thing with comparative safety; the wind, though strong, being now perfectly steady, and the sea no longer so high as to becalm the sail. In this way the *Dark Secret* ran on, hour after hour, Andrews in a sort of stupor—half asleep, half awake—but completely at rest, till, of a sudden, the gray dawn began to shine in the east over the black seas, and the master of the *Dark Secret* awoke, with a start, rubbing his eyes, and exclaiming:

"Jerushy Solomons! what a dream for a feller to have! I must be gitting looney, or I wouldn't never dream sich things."

He referred to the fact that he had dreamed of having a passenger on board the *Dark Secret*, who had come aboard from the sea in some wonderful manner, and who had come up to see him, the captain, as a sort of compliment to him.

Where this passenger had come from, he did not dream; but the impression that he had seen him, and that he was a little imp of a boy, dressed in rags, and looking more like an organ-grinder's monkey than anything else, was so vivid that he caught himself looking all around the boat in search of such a visitor, and felt disappointed that he was not in that part of the castle.

"Mighty queer dream, that," quoth the captain to himself.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE IS HE? WHERE WAS HE?

The sun rose out of the ocean at last, right in front of the bow of the *Dark Secret*, and Captain Andrews, completely awake now, said to himself, musingly:

"Well, I'm glad I come. This beats Borsting all holler!"

He referred to the fact that the sea air was exhilarating, the sun bright, the waves tipped with gold on every side, while the surface of the sea was covered with fishes, leaping out of the water as if in play, and followed overhead by myriads of sea birds, who, every now and then, darted down into the midst of the leaping shoals, and emerged carrying away something in their talons.

The *Dark Secret*, being so small, attracted no attention from the denizens of the deep, or, at least, excited no fear, for the fishes came swimming up alongside as boldly as if the dory had been one of their own kind, while at a distance of half a mile or so Andrews beheld, with a thrill of apprehension, the spouts of a school of whales.

For that morning, he was limited in his choice to two articles. He could either eat the bread or the cake; but, if he let them go for another day, they would be unpalatably stale, and Captain Andrews was an epicure in his way. He liked fresh bread, hated stale, and that is the reason he only took one loaf with him besides biscuits, for he knew that the second loaf would only get stale if he took it along. So he got out his bunch of keys from where they had been hanging over his head as he slept and unlocked "Locker No. 6," in which he kept the bread and ham. The latter had been cooked before starting, and all he had to do was to cut in and make a meal.

He put in his hand and drew forth the loaf, when he uttered a cry of horror and amazement, while his hair almost stood up and stirred the woolen cap from over his ears, where he had drawn it on going to rest.

He remembered putting that loaf into the locker the night before, hot from the oven, and especially baked for him, along with the cake, by his cousin and friend, Mrs. Mehittabel Tubbs.

And now some one, or something, had cut into that loaf, taking

away at least half thereof, while the ham had been invaded by a reckless knife, and a great chunk cut out of the very best part down to the bone. No wonder Captain Andrews uttered a cry of amazement, but this time it was succeeded by one of anger and determination, as he cried aloud:

"This here has gone jest a leetle too fur! I'll find that thing, or I'll eat my head!"

He did not really mean that he would eat his own head, for that is an impossibility, but the captain meant to imply that not to find the thief who had stolen his ham and bread was as impossible as the other feat. In fact, Captain William A. Andrews was exceedingly angry, and he had enough to make him so. He had counted on having nice, soft bread for breakfast, fairly soft bread for dinner, and not very stale bread for supper. Whereas, now he was deprived of all but his breakfast, and would have to make his dinner off biscuit and beans. And, although the captain liked beans, he did not hanker after beginning them too early, when he knew he had nothing else after the ham and beef were gone to last him all the way to England.

Therefore, the captain was very wrath, and shouted out, well knowing that the thief could not be far off:

"I'll take the hide off of you, when I catch you, whoever you are!"

And then he set to work to eat his breakfast, making his meal of bread and ham, washed down with a bottle of Apollinaris water, of which he was inordinately fond, and which served him for all other drinks.

After he had eaten, the captain, who had been in deep thought during the meal, arose and put away his dishes, after which he divested himself of his outer garments, lowered the sail of the *Dark Secret*, and sprang into the sea, swimming around his little vessel, and thereby getting as much exercise in a half hour as he could have secured by a ten-mile walk. This, his bath, served two objects—exercise and cleanliness—for the captain always made his morning toilet that way when he could, which was not often.

That morning, however, he seemed to have a special object in his swim, for he went all around the boat, put his ear close to every plank, and peered into every streak of calking or paint, as if he expected to find some one hidden away between the paint and the planks.

He was striving to solve the mystery of the hidden passenger on board the *Dark Secret*, and wondering where in the deuce he could be hidden.

He had given up the ghostly theory, since he found the ham gone, for, as he said to himself in his soliloquy:

"Bill Andrews, don't make a consarned fool of yourself! Whoever heard of ghosts eating and drinking?"

And then, of a sudden, his dream occurred to him, of the impish boy in the ragged garments, and he said to himself that he would catch that boy yet, wherever he had hidden himself.

Yet, look as he would, he could see no sign of a space wherein any human being could have hidden himself, and at last clambered on board again, and sat down in the sun to dry, for he had but four towels on board, and always economized with them as much as possible.

The fresh breeze and sun soon dried him, and then he resumed his rough suit, took out his comb, brush, and tooth-brush, and made his toilet, with great satisfaction, sparing for his teeth just half a pint of fresh water—all he could afford for such a luxury.

Then he said to himself aloud, in his old way:

"Come, Bill Andrews, guess I'll treat you to a cigar this morn-

ing. We might as well smoke 'em up while they last, and take the pipes as soon as there ain't no help for it."

He unlocked Locker No. 5 this time, and fished out the box of cigars given him by his generous admirer, Mr. Rice.

He remembered that he had taken exactly two cigars the night before, and had replaced the box, locking the door. Now, to his amazement and almost fury, some one had taken, by actual count, six cigars out of the top row, leaving the gap plainly visible. Then, to add to the insult offered, a box of matches which had been in the locker had been taken away, and Andrews had to go to his stores to get another to light his own cigar.

Therefore, there is no wonder that Captain William A. Andrews, of Point of Pines, Boston Harbor, was very angry. The ham was bad enough, but to steal a man's cigars, when he had only enough to carry him over the ocean, was adding insult to injury, and no wonder William A. Andrews raved and swore.

"Douse my top lights, and bust every sling in the cro'-jack yard!" he exclaimed, viciously—and this was an oath that he never emitted, save when very much excited—"if I find the cuss that stole them cigars, I'll feed him to the fishes! And I'm a-goin' to find him, too, if it takes me till we get to Queenstown. I'll sleep with one eye open arter this."

So saying, he steered on for another hour or two, glancing around him keenly all the time, but buried in deep thought.

The subject of his meditations burst forth at last, in the exclamation:

"I'd give five cents to know where that cuss hid himself!"

Captain Andrews had always been a very careful and prudent man, and for him to offer five cents was as much as for some men to offer a hundred dollars.

To his amazement, the same voice that had spoken before came again, in the same squeaky accents, saying:

"Make it a dollar, and don't be mean."

The moment the voice came, in broad daylight, the captain jumped to his feet, and peered in the direction from whence he thought it had come, then he muttered to himself:

"That's the only way to do. I'll never find out, in God's world, unless I see how she trims."

The captain was a very old and experienced sailor, and he had loaded his dory with especial reference to her capacity for riding heavy seas, with a light bow and stern, all her weights being put in the midship portion of the vessel.

He had loaded her himself, to come down to a certain load line, and had tried her, the day before starting, with a special view to her stability. Then he made a mark in the place where the water came up on the bows, before he took his place, while a friend had marked another, after he was inside, the difference in depth being the difference of "trim," caused by his hundred and eighty pounds of bone and muscle.

No sooner had he made this resolution than he lowered his sail, stripped off his clothes again in a great hurry, and jumped overboard, to swim around the dory a second time. He took distance, and noticed that the bow was a little lower than the stern, but remembered that he had put the ballast that way, on purpose to counterbalance his own weight. On swimming close to the mark, however, he found it an inch and a half under water, and exclaimed, aloud, in his joy:

"Aha! Found you at last, have I? You're in the bow, young man." With that he swam around to the waist, the only place at which he could board the boat from the water, and was just about to climb on board, when he was confronted by the face and figure of a small, elfish-looking boy, who had sprung from Heaven knew

where, and who held out Captain William A. Andrews' own razor over the fingers with which he clutched the gunnel, saying, firmly:

"Now, if you're a-goin' to throw me inter the sea, you don't git aboard this here hooker! I've got the bulge on you, cap, and don't you forgit it!"

CHAPTER IV.

SAM SHORT.

There was no denying the truth of the observation made by the impish boy. Captain Andrews kept his razors exceedingly sharp, and, no matter how small this boy might be, he could cut off the fingers of the biggest man that ever stepped in the position of vantage in which he found himself at that moment.

Besides which, there was something so amazing in his aspect and manners that Andrews could only stare at him, and ejaculate: "Who air you, in Heaven's name?"

This impish boy had a strange, pinched-up face, like that of a little old man, wrinkled prematurely with suffering of all kinds, with great dark eyes—the only beauty in his face—small features, a pointed chin, but very white teeth. Over this strange, emaciated face hung some wild, tow-colored hair, all in a shock and tangle; and below it was a thin, narrow-shouldered frame, with bones sticking out of the rags that covered it only partially, in the form of a jacket, and what had once been knee-breeches of velveteen, now all frayed, worn, and greasy with age.

There was no vestige of linen, shoes, or cap; and the boy had drawn back his lips from his white teeth as he snarled, angrily:

"Pitch me into the sea, will yer? Food for fishes, am I? We'll see about that! I can sail this hooker as well as you, if it comes to that, Cap Andrews! No, don't ye try it, or I'll cut ye!"

And he actually made a chop at the captain's hands with the razor with such a resolute and determined air that Andrews saw he would have cut him, and involuntarily let go of the gunnel, and swam away a foot or two, crying:

"What do you mean, boy? Who air you?"

"I'm Sam Short, the disguised prince—that's what I am," the imp said, with a queer mingling of banter and earnestness in his voice. "I come from royal blood, somewhere or other, and I want to take a trip to the place where they have kings and queens, to see if any of 'em won't make me out to be their heir apparent to the kingdom. So I took my passage aboard this 'ere hooker, cap; and now the question is, whether you'll swim back to Ameriky, or whether you're ready to swear that you ain't goin' to hurt me all the way to Queenstown? I've heard all the bad words you said about me, cap."

"Then, where in the name of wonder were you hiding?" asked the captain, his wonder so much excited by the strange antics of this impish boy that he had almost forgotten to be angry. "Tell me that, and I'll forgive you everything and take you to England."

"Wouldn't you like to know, cap?" was the provoking reply, as the imp held up the razor, with a taunting smile on his face, as if to warn Andrews against nearer approach. "You built the boat, and you know just where a boy of my size could hide. Find out. I ain't going to tell you, if you don't know. Now, then, are you going to cut up shines with me if you come aboard, or not? If you are, I'll just histe the sail and leave you to the sharks. I seen quite a lot when you was asleep, and one of 'em come and peeked into the boat, as if he wanted to git a bit off yer nose, cap."

As he spoke, he took hold of the rope that hoisted the little lateen sail to its position of vantage, and began to haul on it, when Andrews, seeing that, if he allowed such a thing, his chance

would be gone, made a couple of rapid strokes, and seized the gunnel again.

The moment he did so, the boy dropped the rope, and made another dab at the swimmer's fingers with the razor, saying:

"No, ye don't, cap. I warn't born yesterday."

And a second time Andrews had to let go to save his fingers; while the boy, as if he felt himself complete master of the situation, said:

"Now, you might as well give in one time as another, cap. I come on this v'y'ge to get to England, and I'm a-goin' to get to England, if I have to sail her alone. Me and you ain't any too much for this 'ere hooker, and there ain't no sense in our quarrelin' with each other. I kin keep awake while you sleep, and wicey warcey, as they call it, and that's ever so much better than me lettin' you drown, or you lettin' me drown, ain't it, cap?"

He let his voice take a coaxing tone as he said the last words, and Andrews, who had been doing a deal of thinking since he had been in the water, was fain to reply:

"I don't suppose that I should have thrown you overboard, in any event, you little scarecrow; but I certainly shall ask some passing ship to take you back again as soon as possible."

The imp in the boat showed his teeth again in the same snarling grin, as he replied, angrily:

"Then you kin stay in the water and drown! I ain't goin' to be sent back to no one. I'm goin' to England, and no one ain't goin' to stop me. Good-by, cap. I'll histe the sail."

And, with that, he made a sudden and desperate hauling in on the halyard for the little yard, and sent the sail up as far as the masthead, when Andrews again got his hand on the gunnel, and again the boy had to drop his hauling and jump back to beat off the assault of his powerful foe. This time he seemed beside himself with rage, for he shrieked out, furiously:

"Is that what ye're arter? I'll show ye, then! Look a-here!"

And, with that, he held up the very dynamite cartridge which Captain Andrews had brought out of the locker and laid on the gunnel, just before he took his breakfast.

"I'll throw this right at yer, and bust ye, like ye busted the sea-sarpint last night," he said, his face fairly livid with fear and anger. "if ye don't swear that ye won't harm me, won't say a cross word to me, and that ye'll let me stay aboard this here hooker till ye kin land me at some European port."

The captain, for the first time since this singular boy had taken possession of the *Dark Secret*, experienced a spasm of fear. He knew that the smallest boy was just as efficacious as the largest man in handling such a terrible explosive, and knew, also, that the fuse of the cartridge could be ignited with perfect ease from a common match.

"Look here, boy," he said, hastily, "I promise I won't hurt you, if you will let me come aboard. I'll carry you as far as I can; and, if I see a ship going to England, that passes us, I will either put you aboard her, or beg enough provisions from her to take us across. Is that a bargain? You see, I only brought enough for one man, and another mouth is a serious inconvenience."

He used his best language, and the boy evidently understood it, for he bobbed his head in something like a bow, and replied:

"Captain William A. Andrews, is that a bargain—honor bright—so help you Bob—kiss the book—twenty-five cents? Hey?"

"It is that—and more," replied Andrews.

The boy put his head on one side, like a bird, and asked:

"What more, Captain William A. Andrews?"

"It is the word of an honest man, which never was broken before," the sailor replied, gravely. "Now, look here, Sam Short, if

that is your name, let me come aboard that boat, and don't fool any more."

"Cap, you kin come aboard," the youngster replied, in his queer tones, shrill and impish, like his looks. "But, mind you, I take this with me. I ain't goin' to have no shennannigan with me, mind ye, and I've seed too many big men like you that never kep' their words to a boy, but told 'em lies, and then walloped 'em when they got 'em foul. I'll take this with me, and keep a match by her."

He held up the dynamite cartridge as he spoke, and skipped away to the bow of the boat, where he perched himself in front of the mast, and looked around the corner of the sail, as Captain Andrews climbed on board, hoisted his canvas, and then began to dress himself as he sat at the tiller, steering.

Once more the *Dark Secret* began to cleave the waters in the direction of Europe, and this time the breeze was so strong that the sea, though not high, was exceedingly rough and short.

The sun had risen about an hour high when they made their bargain, and now, as the little boat went up and down the great seas, they began to catch glimpses of the ocean around them.

From the level of the boat the horizon commanded was less than two miles, while, when the waves carried them up, they could see as much as ten by fits and starts. When this occurred, they found that they were in the track of many ships, as Andrews had expected would be the case, but, on account of their own lowness in the water, could only see their upper sails.

The prospects, opened when they could command the top of a wave, were swallowed up when they were in the trough of the sea; and they were down there pretty often, for, every time they got between two waves, the wind would be taken right out of the little sail with a flap, and it had to depend upon the impulse already received to carry it to the next summit.

Moreover, as the day advanced, and the wind strengthened, the sea rose higher and higher, while the tops of the waves, instead of rolling on in smooth, green mountains, began to curl over in froth.

And when this happened, and the *Dark Secret* happened to hit such a "comber," the bow or stern, or waist of the dory, as the case might be, went under the froth, and let some water aboard.

This happened oftenest at the bow, and it was not long before Sam Short, as he called himself, got a thorough drenching as the nose of the *Dark Secret* buried itself in the top of a wave, which very nearly washed the boy overboard.

The water dripped off the deck almost instantly, but Sam had had enough of his place at the bow, and pretty soon came creeping aft, to the well in which Captain Andrews was seated, saying, coaxingly:

"Say, boss, don't let's me and you have any hard feelin's agin' each other. I wouldn't have come aboard your boat if I could have helped myself. Ye don't want to drownd me, do ye?"

Andrews looked at him sourly enough. The gallant captain was in a decided ill temper. This stowaway, small as he was, was going to be a nuisance in a voyage of the kind which they were entering on.

CHAPTER V.

GETTING ACQUAINTED.

"Look here, my boy," said the captain, "this boat warn't built for pleasure, but for hard work. The prospect is that till we get to the other side there won't be a day but what we'll be swept by the seas, more or less, principally more. You came aboard, and you've got to take the consequences. I only wish I had never seen you."

The boy—Andrews noticed, now that he was beside him, that he was only about three feet and a half in height—crept a little closer to the master of the *Dark Secret*, and said, in a low voice:

"Cap, if you knowed what brung me here, you wouldn't say that; and if I'd knowed you was goin' to feel so bad about it, I wouldn't have come at all."

The angry sailor gave him a shove with his hand, saying:

"Oh, nonsense; don't pipe your eye for me, boy. I have heard boys tell pitiful stories before this. You came aboard this boat to—stop! Now, just you tell me why you did come aboard, if you can tell the truth for once in your life."

Sam shrunk a little away from the captain, looking at him with his bright, dark eyes, in a strange sort of way, as if he had no fears for his own safety, but a good deal of anger on the subject.

"I can tell the truth as well as any one you ever saw," he said, in a quiet way, "when I feel like it. When I want to lie, I lie to please myself, and no one else."

The captain laughed, in spite of himself, and the boy—who had been watching him intently—instantly brightened up, and exclaimed:

"That's right, cap. Let's me and you be friends. Come, I'll tell you my story, if you like, and all about it."

The captain eyed him shrewdly, as he returned the query:

"Which story is it you are going to tell—the lie, or the truth?"

The boy smiled, for the first time since he had been on board the boat, and his smile was, like himself, impish and mocking, as he said:

"Don't ax too many questions, cap. But, say! don't you wantner make up yer journal, and tell all about your fust day. I kin steer while you write, you know, and then I'll be some use to some one."

The appeal was an artful one, for Andrews had determined when he began his voyage, to make a complete record of his progress, whenever he could find time to write, and he could not leave the helm in such a sea. But then, neither was he sure that this "puny little wretch," as he mentally called him, would be equal to the task of steering the dory, under the buffeting she was receiving.

"How do I know you can steer at all, sonny?" he asked.

Sam laughed quite proudly, as he replied:

"Jest you let me git ahold of that tiller, and I'll show you whether I kin hold her nose to it or not, cap. I've set my mind on bein' a sailor-boy, and I've steered schooners afore this, and don't you forgit that same, Captain William A. Andrews."

"How did you get my name, and where did you get aboard my boat?" was the next question asked by the captain, who was really curious to find by what means the boy had managed to remain hidden so long.

Sam laughed still more naturally, as he replied:

"That sounds nateral, cap. I runned away from home, more'n a year agone, to be a sailor; and I got stowed away on schooners and sloops and sharpies, and every other sort of craft; and whenever they found me out, they allers walloped me, and set me to work till I was ready to drop, and then walloped me again, tellin' me to go home to my mammy."

"And quite right, too," the sailor said, emphatically. "What's the use of a kid like you, anyway? You'll never make a sailor."

Sam laughed still more gleefully, as he retorted:

"That's what jest all of 'em said; and jest all of 'em didn't know the fust thing they was talkin' about. I've made up my mind to be a sailor and to go all over the world, somehow or

other; and I warn't goin' to ship on no steamer, jest because I know what they does with the stowaways there."

"And what do they do with them?" asked the captain.

Sam shook his head meaningly, saying:

"They don't catch me in any sich foolishness, I kin tell ye. I've heerd a boy say that they put him right into the engine-room, with nothen to do but shovel coal the hull v'y'ge, and he didn't never see a sight of the salt water till he got to the other side."

"And I wish I had just such a place to put you in, Sammy," the captain observed, in his grimmest way. "Where in the world did ye hide, anyway, sonny? I searched the hull cargo, from top to bottom, and never a hide nor hair of you did I find. Where were you?"

"That's tellin's, cap," was the cool reply. And then the boy added: "Now, if you want to make that journal, the sooner you git at it the better, for theres' goin' to be heavy weather afore sundown."

He spoke in such a grave, matter-of-fact way, that Andrews stared at him very dryly, as he asked:

"And what makes you think that, Mr. Sam? Are you any relation to Old Prob, that you can tell the weather ahead?"

Sam shrugged his shoulders as he replied:

"Never mind how I know it. I know it. You'll have rain afore night, and a heavy sea after noon. You see if you don't. Look at them sheep, a-runnin' all over the blue field. Ain't that a sure sign of wind?"

He pointed to the clouds, which now, large, heavy and greasy-looking at the edges, were scudding very rapidly over the sky, meeting a second series of clouds that seemed to be above them, stretched in long, parallel streaks, hazy and indistinct.

The captain looked up and admired the quickness of the boy's observation of natural phenomena. Sam had noticed a sign that had escaped Andrews' watchfulness. Heavy weather was certainly coming on, and if he wished to do any writing he might as well begin.

So he handed the tiller to Sam, saying:

"Keep her head east by north now, and don't keep wabbling like a colt in his first harness."

Then he drew out his note-pad, and began to write as fast as he could with the stylographic pen which he had kept for just such service, and at which Sam gazed with curious eyes.

In the meantime the waif of the sea steered the course of the *Dark Secret* with singular success, and stared around him with great curiosity at everything in the boat, which was a perfect mine of quaint contrivances.

Andrews watched him from his notes, at first, narrowly; but, when he saw that the imp understood his business, with less and less attention, till he became entirely absorbed in his notes, and was writing away like a stenographer, when Sam uttered the sudden cry:

"Hard down, boys. Starboard hard!"

And suiting the action to the word, the imp gave a sweep of the rudder, which sent the bow of the *Dark Secret* flying up into the wind and she filled on the opposite tack, just as something happened.

They had been down in the trough of the sea so many times that they had lost all sense of the vicinity of other vessels. As Sam uttered his cry, they rose to the top of a very high wave, and beheld, almost coming down on them, as it seemed, the bows of an ocean steamer, looking like a floating mountain.

The ship was not more than a couple of cables from them, and she was steering straight for where they had been when Sam

first discovered her. Evidently her lookout had not caught sight of the tiny boat in its occasional visits to the tops of the waves, for she came very near running them down, and, as it was, the nose of the *Dark Secret* was within a foot of the counter of the big steamer when she finally scraped past, and they entered her comparatively smooth wake. It was noticeable that, in a sea like that, the wake of the ship, which in calm weather would have been full of waves, was smoother than the surrounding waves, and the fact was lucky for the *Dark Secret*, which was tossing about like a cork in the sea, with her sail flapping wildly.

The next minute they heard the bell of the engine clang, and the screw of the huge steamer ceased to revolve, while they could see on her stern the letters *Etruria*.

Before the passengers on board could quite get to the taffrail to gaze at this curious little craft that had come on them so suddenly, Captain Andrews, who had been writing busily and took no notice of the change of course, as soon as he saw that Sam was managing the boat right, picked up from the deck, where it had been lying, a curious sort of bow and arrow, invented by himself. It was composed of a big wooden ball, with a hole in the middle, through which an arrow was passed; the notch of the arrow being engaged in a strong India rubber strap, fastened to the ball. Around the shaft of the arrow Andrews had been hastily fastening a short message, while the boat was jibing, and just as she shot into the wake of the *Etruria*, "twang" went the strap, and the arrow flew over the taffrail and fell on the deck, message and all.

Then the captain turned to Sam, saying, with more cordiality than he had yet shown this singular waif:

"I am not so sorry I took you in, boy. You have a cool head, and can steer a boat at a pinch as well as any boy I ever saw. How old are you, by the bye?"

Sam looked him in the eye, and said, quietly:

"Fifteen, sir. You wouldn't think it to look at me, would you?"

The captain started, as he answered:

"No, certainly not. You don't look over seven or eight. What in Heaven's name stunted you so?"

For the first time since he had been on board the little craft, the eyes of the ocean waif moistened, and his voice broke as he said, in his simple, quiet way:

"I guess it is starvation, sir. I never remember the time when I had enough to eat, and—and that makes me think to beg your pardon, sir, for eating so much last night; but I was really starving. I had eaten nothing for three whole days but one onion, which I found in a field, and had drunk only water."

He was speaking gently, with fair language, and Andrews asked, with some curiosity:

"But what made you come on board at all?"

Sam hesitated a moment, and then said:

"I'll tell ye the truth this time, boss, so help me."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAIF'S STORY.

"Cap," said the poor boy—and, now that Andrews looked at him more narrowly, he saw he was painfully emaciated—"I ain't told ye a word of truth. I ain't run away from home; because I haven't got any home to run from. My father was killed in the war, and I never saw him. My mother married a second time, and my stepdaddy drove me out of the house, though my mother owned it in her own name, and—well, sir, what is it?"

The captain was staring at him in a very cynical way, and the stare interrupted the boy. Andrews asked coldly:

"How old are you, then, if your father was killed in the war? That ended twenty-three years ago, boy. Ye see, I'd oughter know, for I was in it myself."

Sam did not exhibit the least discomfiture, as he replied:

"That ain't the only war we've had, cap; is it? My father was killed with Custer, by the Indians."

We will not enlarge on the story of poor little Sam, for we have no room. Suffice it that, after the marriage of his mother to the New Yorker, whose name was Long, bit by bit, all of the property of poor Captain Short, Sam's father, had gone into the stomach of Mr. Long, or onto his back, after which Mrs. Long (once Mrs. Short) died of grief and consumption, in a very few weeks, while Mr. Long took to drink and beating his stepson. In these occupations, with which he used to vary the monotony of life, he had passed a year after his wife's death, when he had suddenly decamped, leaving his rent unpaid and poor little Sam, then a child of ten, all alone to face the world. Since that day Sam had wandered from city to city, as a child-tramp, exposed to all kinds of hardships, and picking up a scanty living as he could, till it suddenly occurred to him that his mother, who had been, as she told him, a Miss Middleton before her first marriage, and had come from Ireland, had some relatives living there, and that he would go and seek them out, while yet there was time for him to learn anything.

"For you know, boss," said the poor boy, in a desolate sort of way, "all the schooling I ever had was before my mother died; and not much of that. I have forgotten most of what I did know, and the time will come when I won't know nothen, if this goes on. That's why I want to get to the other side of the water, sir."

"And so you shall, God willing," replied the captain, heartily; for the simple pathos of the boy's story had touched him inexpressibly. "Bill Andrews ain't the boy to desert a poor orphan, or make him shift for himself, and as long as there's a crust to eat aboard the dory, me and you'll share it, Sam. But talking of that, you acted mean when you stole my cigars last night, bub. I could stand the ham and the bread, 'cause you was hungry; but no starvin' critter wants to smoke cigars."

A slight flush crossed the face of Sam Short, as he heard the gentle tones of reproof, and he said, hurriedly:

"Cap, I own up. It was mean, and I hadn't oughter done it. But seeing it's you, I'll bring em back, for I didn't get a chance to smoke one of 'em. You slep' too light not to have wakened with the smell of smoke."

Andrews watched him with new interest, remarking:

"Sam, you're a mighty smart boy, I must say. Where did you hide? I had this boat built accordin' to my own orders; and there ain't a place for a cat to hide, leave alone a boy, that I ain't s'arched."

Sam cast a shrewd, amused glance at him, as he replied:

"And yet there was all the room a boy like me could want, cap; and never a drop of water come in. Only it was that close, I was nigh on bein' sick when you heard me groaning, last night. I thought you would drop on me sure, then."

The captain stared at him thoughtfully for a moment, and then of a sudden started to his feet and went to the bow of the boat, when he paused and pointed down to a certain place, asking:

"Was it there, you scamp?"

Sam nodded.

"Where else would it be, cap? There ain't no ghosts nowadays,

though I reckon you thought there was, when you heard me a-groanin'. I thought I was goin' to be sick, that time."

Then the captain came back slowly and thoughtfully, and said to Sam, in a doubtful sort of way:

"But how did you get in there? I knew all the time there was room for you; but how in thunder did you get in? It's all nailed up on all sides, or else what would be the use of it? I don't see how you could have got in there, Sam."

Sam only laughed and replied:

"I told ye I wouldn't let out how I got there; but I'll tell ye what I will do with ye. To-night, after dark, I'll hide in this boat, and I'll bet you won't be able to find me. Bet ye a cigar on it."

Captain Andrews put on a highly moral air, as he observed:

"Sam, it ain't right for boys like you to bet cigars, or smoke 'em either. The fust gets 'em into gamblin' habits, and the second stunts their growth. You don't want to be a little runt all yer life, do ye?"

Sam shrugged his shoulders philosophically, observing:

"Reckon it don't make much differ, boss. All the growin' I've got to do has to be done quick, if I'm to be any sorter size; and if the smokin' stops the growin', then all I can say is that I ain't sure if I stopped smokin' that I'd begin growin'; and if I ain't sure of that, what's the use of a feller givin' up his comfort? for a good smoke is sich a comfort, cap, when a feller ain't got nothen' else to comfort him. Many's the time when I hadn't got a mouthful to eat, I picked up a butt in the street, and it kinder stopped the rumblin' in my insides to draw in on it. Onst or twist it kinder tumbled me over, too; but then, that warn't no harm in them days. When a man's too sick to eat, it saves just so much, ye know."

There was something in the simple way in which the boy spoke that brought the tears to the eyes of the kind-hearted sailor, and Andrews said, hastily:

"Never mind, then. You shall have your smoke as well as the rest of it, Sam; but, Lord willin', if you and me gits safe to the other side, so we kin make a little money, you won't see any more starving times. And now, boy, I'll take the helm again, for it begins to look dirty over yonder."

Indeed, the greasy-looking clouds that had been scudding over the face of the sky hitherto, like frightened sheep, had now paused and gathered into a huge mass on one side of the heavens, while white feathery streaks, getting more and more numerous, stretched above them, ending in a grayish bank, while the wind was going down, and the sea rising at the same time.

The swells, however, were now perfectly smooth; and the dory rose above them like a cork, so that they had a better view than had hitherto been their portion, on the summits of the swells.

Every time they went up there they commanded a distance of ten or twelve miles, and every time they saw it, things looked more gloomy. The great swells had ceased to be rough, and rolled like big oily mountains of a dark gray, under a sky that was fast losing its blue depth, and getting covered all over with a gray haze. The shadows of great masses of clouds, almost black in places, had begun to gloom over the water, and the wind, as it died away, sighed ominously.

It did begin to look "dirty," and a vague sense of uneasiness would have communicated itself to almost any man but the intrepid sailor who had built and was sailing the *Dark Secret*.

Captain Andrews, instead of looking frightened, merely hauled down his sail, and reduced it to a closely-reefed condition. Having made all snug for the expected blow, he called to Sam to come in beside him in the stern well, and the boy, by his direc-

tions, fastened down the other hatches with their India rubber waterproof strips, so that no matter how deep the boat went into the water, she could not be swamped; after which the two mariners settled down into the stern sheets, so as to shield themselves from the water, and then waited for the storm with all the philosophy they could.

And they had not long to wait, for by the time they had made their preparations, the wind began to rise, and with it the sea, while the hundreds of sails which they had seen as they climbed to the tops of the rollers, could be seen getting smaller and smaller as the ships to which they belonged reduced their canvas.

Half an hour from the time they got into the well-hole, the rain came down in torrents, and the sea began to curl into "combers" of white froth. For a while they stood it well enough, and then it grew so high that they could see nothing except in glimpses, while their little sail was becalmed every time they went down into the trough between two waves.

Just at that moment Sam, who was looking all around and behind him, uttered a cry of warning, and the captain, looking over his shoulder, perceived that a new terror, which they had not yet encountered, was following hard after them, in the shape of the dreaded "ninth wave," which was rolling its gigantic head behind them, as if it had just found a spot where wind and tide could help each other instead of fighting for ascendancy.

It was the most terrible sight they had yet seen on their voyage, for the wave curled over toward them, as if determined to bury the dory; and they both knew that such a wave, falling, would very likely smash their mast and sail all to pieces if they left the sail up.

But what was to be done? There was the wave, racing after them, and it could not be long before it would catch them, while it was as much as the life of either of the voyagers was worth to get out of his corner of vantage in the well-hole.

Captain Andrews allowed his grim jaws to grow a little grimmer as he sat up and held on to his tiller; but Sam, who had been glancing apprehensively up at the following wave, could not contain himself, and called out:

"Oh, cap, cap, what'll we do if that comes aboard?"

"Get the rig smashed if I don't get down that sail," quoth Andrews, with his usual iron calmness, as if nothing disturbed him.

"And why don't ye git down the sail?" asked the boy.

"Cause we dassen't git out of the hole," quoth the captain, philosophically. "We've jest got to grin and bear what we can't git over, this trip, Sammy, boy, and the Lord'll take keer of us all."

"But the Lord won't take the sail down, will he?" asked Sam, wistfully. "If he would, now! But hold on a bit, cap; I'll take her down myself."

And the next moment, before Andrews could help him, the little imp had crept out from under the waterproofs, traversed the deck, all slippery as it was with seas, and in another moment had pulled down the little lateen sail by releasing the halyard, which had jammed in some way or other.

The moment he had done so, down came the great "comber" on the stern of the *Dark Secret*, and in another moment the dory was buried in the heart of the wave, and swept on like a cork in a mill-race.

They came to the top of the great "comber," and the wind caught them and was keeping them there, as it rolled on at a rate of some twenty miles an hour, the biggest wave of all in that sea.

The captain smiled with satisfaction, for he knew what had

happened to him; a thing that happens but once in the lifetime of the oldest sailor—but, once happening, is never forgotten.

He knew that the tide which, in advancing on the shore, takes such a time to make itself felt, and advances by such slow degrees, is not to be perceived out at sea, save when one happens to get caught in front or in rear of "the wave," as it is called. This great tidal wave, rolling round the ocean once in each twenty-four hours, goes at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, theoretically; but this is only the rising of the water. It is always followed, at a long distance, by a second wave, which is formed by the attraction of the particles of water for the enormous mass of the true tidal wave, and makes up the celebrated "ninth wave," which tries hard to keep pace with its leader and always fails at last.

Then a new ninth wave is formed in front, and so things go on till the tide is "up," after which the phenomena are reversed, as one may see any day at Coney Island.

But out in the open sea the "ninth wave" frequently travels for as much as a hundred miles ahead at the same rate of speed; and on the back of this wave the *Dark Secret* was now being carried forward with the speed of a railway train.

The glance outboard having satisfied the captain that his imminent peril had resulted to his advantage, he next cast his eyes in search of Sam Short, who had let down the sail in the nick of time.

The boy was nowhere to be seen; and Andrews, in a voice of great alarm, cried out:

"Sam, Sam! little Sam—Sammy; where are you? Did you fall overboard, my son, or are you drowned?"

A voice behind him came to his ears, crying, rather faintly:

"Here I am, cap; and if you don't haul me aboard, I'll have to let go, I guess."

Andrews looked around with amazement, and saw that the heroic boy in executing his task had been struck by the sea, sail and all, and had been swept overboard; but that in going over he had held on to the trailing end of the halyard, which still held on to the cleat at the foot of the mast; and there he was, towing astern, his small, pinched face looking smaller than ever, as he hung on as hard as he could to the slender rope.

To grab the rope and pull the boy in was the work of a moment to the powerful sailor, and, when he had dragged him in, he said, fervently:

"Little Sam, you did something just then that few men would have done, and saved the boat, too. If you hadn't downed that sail when you did we might have been smashed all open and sent to the bottom. I won't forget you for that; and we two'll stick together till we git to the other side of the water, any way."

Sam nodded quite coolly as soon as he had got his breath, and then took his stand on the deck by the side of the mast, looking out over the sea like a circus rider on the back of his galloping steed. They were going as fast as the horse could gallop, but the motion was infinitely more smooth.

In this way they traveled for nearly three hours, the motion becoming so indescribably smooth and delightful that neither of the voyagers wished it ever to stop.

At the end of that time, Sam, who was looking out ahead, perceived, towering high in front of them on the sea, a mass of gray mist with something white and ghostlike gleaming forth from the midst of it, and called out to the captain:

"What's that, cap?"

The captain looked around him—the boy's figure partially interrupting the view—and the moment he saw the object, his face changed to a ghastly pallor, as he ejaculated:

"Lord Heaven, Sammy, I'm afraid we're done for this time, sonny! That's a iceberg, and we're drivin' right down on it, with no steerage way on the boat, and drifting like a log. There ain't nothen we kin do to help ourselves. We've just got to trust in the mercy of the Lord to two poor lone sailors."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ICEBERG, AND AFTER.

The dory had arrived within two cablelengths of the berg, when Sam, who had been watching it closely, uttered a cry of joy, and pointed to its gleaming center.

Then Andrews could see that a huge archway, as regular as if made by the hand of an architect, graced the center of the gigantic structure, and that the boat was going through this arch. The only question was whether, in going through, the iceberg would not be so carried away by the impetus of the great wave that it would be carried on with the boat, and all get wrecked together.

However that might be, there was no way in which the occupants of the dory could avert their fate; and in a very few moments more, with a great dash and splash, which drenched them with spray, they had shot through the archway of the iceberg and were flying away as hard as ever over a free sea.

Then, looking behind, they saw that the mass of the ice had been so enormous that even the tidal wave had not been able to touch it. That berg must have measured three or four miles long, and stood up several hundred feet above the water, while the archway through which they had been driven was, now they looked calmly back, twice as high as the Washington Monument.

"Sammy," said the captain, earnestly, as he realized what they had just done, "I always said this voyage would be the most wonderful that ever was made since old C'lumbus come a-snoopin' around in the night after America; but I'm doused if I ever thought we was to have so many wonderful things happen to us in two days. Why, boy, I've— Jerusha Solomons! There he is again. Douse my top-lights, Sammy, there is such a thing as a sea-sarpen! Look at the cuss now."

He pointed down the length of the great "comber" as he spoke, and there they beheld, among the birds and fishes that had congregated there for a free passage, the same enormous eel that had given the captain such a start in the night.

Now that it was broad daylight, they could see the great creature, and realized that it was nothing more than an eel, magnified to a length of near a hundred feet, and rather thin in proportion to its length. It had taken up its position in a mass of floating weeds, and lay there, coiled outside of the island of brown, something like a land snake, sunning itself.

Nothing seemed to be afraid of it, for they could see the Mother Carey's chicks alighting on its back and flying all over it.

Pretty soon afterward Sam called the captain's attention to some other refugees on the top of the tidal wave in the shape of a number of seals, sea-lions, and walruses, who seemed to be enjoying themselves hugely in the rapid motion of the wave.

"Sammy," said the captain, suddenly, "I've often wondered how it was that them seals and sea-lions could cross a big ocean like this, when they have to come to the top of the water to breathe so frequently, and swim jest like we do. It allers seemed to me that the idea they swam like the fishes warn't the cheese. Now I see how they do it. They jest waits for one of these tide-waves and gets on top like we do."

Shortly after that the great "comber" on which they had come

so far, at such a pace, seemed to die away gradually into the rest of the sea, to lose its propulsive power, and at last the *Dark Secret* lay on a perfectly calm sea, surrounded, at distances varying from a hundred yards to several miles, with all sorts of marine animals, but with no signs of another sail anywhere on the broad ocean.

They had become a part of the immensity of space. The first indication they had that such was the case came when the seals and walruses that had been taking their ride on the wave, and had been left with the other flotsam and jetsam, began to swim toward the dory and examine it with great curiosity.

Evidently they had no idea that it contained enemies of any sort, but wanted to find out what it was, for inside of half an hour from the time they entered the calm they were surrounded by a ring of walruses, seals and sea-lions, staring at the boat with their big eyes.

The sea-lions barked, the walruses growled, and the seals gave their soft, bleating cry, while the occupants of the *Dark Secret*, with the prospect of a little leisure on their hands, began to make ready their supper. They had had nothing to eat since breakfast.

Captain Andrews had brought with him a small alcohol lamp, just enough to boil a kettle of water, and the Boston man proposed to have a dish of beans, in the form of soup, since he could not bake them.

At the same time, inasmuch as he knew the danger the boat ran, in case the walruses grew too enterprising in their curiosity, he got ready a couple of torpedoes, and told Sam to do the cooking, while he watched the enemy.

Thus it came to pass that in a short time the little lamp was burning merrily away, and a small copper kettle was beginning to sing, at which sights and sounds the ring of sea animals pressed closer and closer in ungovernable curiosity.

The sight of the blue flame was one thing, and the sound of the hissing steam another.

Then, as the process of cooking the beans approached perfection, the added stimulus of odor combined to make the animals still more eager.

Bit by bit the great walruses had approached within a yard or two, and lay there in the water, packed as close as herrings in a barrel, staring at the boat with unwinking curiosity, that was extremely disquieting.

At last Captain Andrews, not without some trepidation, on account of the proximity and numbers of the animals, lighted the fuse of a dynamite cartridge, and threw it into the midst of them.

The moment it exploded, there came such a commotion that, for a few minutes, the strong-hearted sailor trembled like a leaf, as he looked at the walruses.

The cartridge burst and blew open the head of a bull walrus, who appeared to have been the leader of the herd.

The great beast died almost instantly, and the blood from its shattered head stained the waves for yards around, while the other walruses, snuffing it, seemed to go wild with rage and terror, as they darted to and fro—in, under, and over the water, making the air resound with their bellowings, as they trumpeted the news to each other.

Presently one of them made a dash at the *Dark Secret*, and tried to climb on board, with its horrid-looking tusks. It had actually got one flipper over the gunnel, and the boat was beginning to careen to one side, under the enormous weight, when little Sam Short, seeming to be perfectly fearless, picked up the boathook which lay by the side of the mast, in its hooks, and

drove the sharp point into the walrus' eye, with such sharpness and force that the animal fell back instantly, with a roar of pain, and dashed off, shaking its head and howling in stentorian tones.

A second cartridge, thrown into the midst of the more uproarious bulls, as they swam to and fro, produced another commotion, but this time it was of a different nature, for the animals began to get frightened and try to escape.

A third cartridge completed the stampede, and within half an hour from the time they had come out of the fog, Captain William A. Andrews and his small shipmate were enjoying a supper of Boston beans, which was made more memorable by a remark dropped by the unfortunate waif of the streets.

Passing his tin plate for a third time, and asking for "some of them nice things, please, boss," Andrews asked, naturally enough:

"Why, did you never eat beans before, Sammy?"

"No, sir, please sir," replied this extraordinary boy; "but I like 'em wonderfully well."

"Then you shall have all you wish," the sailor returned, heartily. "Oh, to think of all the years you've missed, Sammy; not knowing Borsting Baked Beans! Have some more."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GROUND SWELL.

After supper the captain went to the cigar-box, and observed: "Sammy, when I took these here out for the fust time, I thought I'd give 'em up till I got to the other side, but seein' as these was give to me free, and that we've got lots of backy besides, why, we won't count this, but jest smoke 'em up while they last, and then go to the pipes. Where's them six you hooked last night while I was asleep? I don't want 'em back, ye understand, but I want see where ye hid them."

Sammy grinned as he replied:

"That'd be tellins, cap. I ain't goin' to show you where I hid or how I got in, till the end of the v'yage. But as fur the cigars, I've got one about me now, and if so be you're agreeable, I'll light up."

With that he produced from the recesses of his rags one of Captain Andrews' cigars, and stuck it into his mouth with all the ease and assurance of a veteran smoker, which he evidently was.

Then the two fellow-voyagers, so strangely met, proceeded to blow clouds of blue vapor into the still and motionless air of the calm sea as the stars came out, one by one, over their heads, and were mirrored in the water.

Little Sammy looked over, and when he saw the way in which the images of the stars swayed to and fro on the oily swells—though there was not a breath of air to move the waves—asked the captain:

"Say, cap, what makes the water move like the ponds at home?"

Captain Andrews looked at the boy keenly as he asked:

"What ponds? Where is your home, boy?"

Sammy sighed heavily, but shook his head, saying:

"Never mind, cap; don't ax about the times when I used to have a home. I ain't like you, ye know, with lots to look back on and be proud of. All I kin remember is black and bad, and I hate to think of it. But what makes the stars dance about so in the water, when there ain't no wind, cap? That's what I axed ye."

"Cause of the groundswell," replied the captain, tersely.

"And why do they call it the groundswell?" asked the boy.

"Cause it don't come off the ground, I guess, Sammy. Any-way, as long as I've been to sea, I never seen it quite asleep, and allers heard this swell called the groundswell. I call it the storm-swell often times, 'cause I know, when it gits high, that there's been a storm somewheres. Look-a-there, Sammy, I guess she's a-risin' now, and we'll have a reg'lar tossin' time before mornin'."

He pointed to a smooth, oily-looking swell, a little higher than the others, under the starlight.

The truth of his remark became visible a few minutes later, when more swells came rolling on, one after the other, although not a breath of air was stirring, each a little higher than its predecessor, till the dory, that had been lying perfectly still on the water, began to rock to and fro with a gentle, waving motion that momentarily increased, till it grew too severe for comfort.

It seemed strange to have such a perfect calm, and yet such a sea, but the longer the calm continued the higher grew the sea.

Inside of an hour the swells rose to at least thirty feet high, and only their smoothness prevented the boat from being overwhelmed. They had nothing to steady her or give her progress; but one moment they seemed to be sent up to the stars, the next they were down in a valley with great mountains of water on either side, and it needed but a slight impulse given to any one of these mountains to make it curl over and overwhelm them in an instant.

Little Sam Short, reckless as he seemed to be, was wonderfully impressed with the spectacle, when they went down into the trough of the sea. Every time they did so, Andrews could hear him draw a deep and painful breath, and see him crouch up, as if expecting to be overwhelmed by the falling waters.

But as the minutes passed on, and still the dory surmounted the water-mountains, as if she had been made of cork, the spirits of the boy rose, and it was not long before Andrews heard him singing:

"Here we go up, up, up!

Here we go down, down, down!

Here we go wig-wag, wig-wag, wig-wag,

And never a one of us drown."

But though the danger vanished, in view of the remarkable buoyancy of the boat, the inconvenience of being tossed about grew greater and greater, as the angle increased. The dory was but twelve feet long, and the waves measured at least sixty on the slope, while they sent the boat up at an angle that nearly tipped out the passengers, ahead and astern, and compelled them to cling to the gunnel, to save themselves from going overboard.

It was in the midst of this strange commotion that Sam shouted:

"Steamer, boss. Ain't she jest a-goin', though?"

They were on the top of a wave when he said it, and pointed out astern; but before Andrews could turn his head, down they went into the trough of the sea, and lay there for more than two minutes, the waves seeming to have conspired together to refuse to lift them up.

When at last they did get to the top of a wave, the captain saw that Sam had spoken the truth. A very large ocean steamer, headed to the eastward, was coming over the swells with its great bow pointed straight toward them, all the lights gleaming from its portholes, till it resembled a fairy palace in the night.

They could hear the pulsing of the screw as she came on,

but the beauty of the sight did not hinder it from being very disquieting, for the steamer was heading straight for them, and they had no light out. Captain Andrews, on his former voyage in the *Nautilus*, with his brother, had made the discovery that a light in a small boat will attract the fishes for miles around, and he had no desire to make the acquaintance of all the sharks in the vicinity.

They had not long to deliberate on the subject, for the steamer was not a mile away when first discovered, and, if they could not get out of the way, was sure to run over them.

There being no wind, they could not sail out of the way, and only one thing remained, which was to burn a flashlight. Luckily for them, Andrews had brought a number of Bengal lights for just such emergencies, and in a moment more a blue flame flashed up from the stern of the dory, as the captain touched a piece of paper to the end of his cigar. It lasted only about five seconds, when he lighted another, but even that brief period of light had been enough to reveal them.

By the time the second light had sputtered away into the darkness, they saw the long line of portholes make a sweep to the right, and the huge ship thundered majestically past them in safety.

"Hooroar for us, cap," shouted Sammy, exultingly. "Ain't she jest a picter, and don't I wish I was a big-bug aboard her."

Indeed, she looked exceedingly handsome in the night, against the stars, with the long line of gleaming lights at her side, and Captain Andrews was about to acquiesce in the boy's raptures, when he happened to look into the water between them and the steamer, and saw a sight that he never forgot.

A shoal of sharks, more than a hundred in number, attracted by the triple line of brilliant lights, was following the steamer, exactly in her wake, all the great brutes swimming with their heads near the surface of the water, eying the ship hungrily, as if they waited for something to come to them.

It was about seven or half-past seven in the evening, and every now and then, as the steamer passed, the passengers of the *Dark Secret* saw things drop from a certain porthole, about amidships, from the galley.

The moment any such thing happened, there was an instant rush of the sharks for the morsel, and they could be seen snapping at each other like hungry dogs.

This spectacle lasted during the whole time in which the steamer was passing them, and such was the voracity and savage manner of the sharks that Sam Short turned pale, and said to Andrews:

"Say, cap, I'd rather have them fellers foller the steamer than foller this hooker. Ain't that so?"

The captain made no answer, save to put his hand on his lips and point out into the water beside them.

The swells were as high as ever, and the steamer had gone out of sight behind them almost as soon as she became visible, but they became satisfied before long that she had not taken all the sharks with her. Every now and then, as they topped a swell, they would see the black fins showing above the top of another, and once or twice, when down in the trough of the sea, the whole outline of a great shark appeared, hanging almost above them, as if he would leap aboard in an instant more.

It was a still more trying position to be in than before, for the average length of the sharks was about that of the boat, while a few were even longer, and they were all swimming about in an eager and hungry manner that was decidedly disquieting.

"What do you s'pose they'll do?" asked Sam, apprehensively, as one great brute put its head out of the water close to the

dory, and then dived, with a flap of its tail that splashed water on the occupants of the dory.

Andrews only shook his head and made a silent gesture of pointing to the stars above him, which Sam understood.

There was literally nothing for them to do in so small a boat but to sit still and take what came to them.

At last, just as the tossing about in the calm began to make them feel sick, came a puff of wind as they rose to the top of one of the great billows, and a moment later Andrews said to Sam:

"Histe away the sail, Sammy. We're going to get out of this, now."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when they received a violent shock from beneath, and another shark rose close to the gunnel, as if it had humped its back in going under the boat, nearly throwing the occupants into the sea.

In another moment Sam was hauling wildly to get the sail up.

Not a bit too early, either, for, as he got it up, they received a blow from another shark, and saw a third rising out of the water, not ten feet from their stern, snapping at the air savagely.

Then the sail filled, and they began to move at last, leaving the sharks far behind.

When midnight came Andrews gladly resigned the helm to Sam, who steered on, without any further adventure, till the sun again rose over the sea.

When it did, Captain Andrews woke from a doze and asked his first mate, as he began to call the boy:

"Well, Mr. Short, what's the news during the night? Seen anything of any ships?"

"Weather's been too thick to see much of anything, cap," the boy replied. "What's that 'ere over there, I wonder? Looks like another iceberg, don't it, cap?"

He pointed ahead over the bow, where the sea, now running in short, chopping waves, was covered with a thin, mistlike rain, above which the dark scud-clouds drove rapidly.

Through this misty appearance rose the dim white outlines of a huge berg, and as they approached closer they beheld the same great archway through which they had passed at an earlier portion of the voyage. They had been absent from it about eighteen hours, and now the winds had driven them back to it in broad daylight.

As they approached it they saw that the berg was still of enormous size, measuring over a mile, while the archway, which had been as high as the Washington Monument, twice over, was now still higher again, with a thin top, that threatened every minute to break the whole concern in two.

The wind still drove them on, but, as they neared the ice, they hauled in their little sheet as close as they could and skirted the berg, to see what it was like.

The mist cleared away, the heavens brightened so as to give them a splendid view, and Sammy could not help an exclamation of admiration to see the wonderful prismatic colors exhibited by the berg as it sailed majestically on.

Not for long, however, did they indulge their admiration, when it changed to something very like fear, as Sam exclaimed:

"Oh, cap, what's them critters on the ice?"

Captain Andrews looked a moment, and then gave the helm a shove and stood off from the ice as fast as he could, his face turning paler than it had yet done in all the terror of the storm.

For he had spied on the great berg, running to and fro as if frantic, a number of white figures, which he recognized only too well to be polar bears. He knew that, occasionally, on a very large berg, these strange visitors from the Arctic circle got

driven to the south, and he also knew that when such a thing happened the poor brutes were mad with hunger by the time they got to that latitude.

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE DANGER.

The force of the wind compelled the *Dark Secret* to go much nearer to the berg than her captain wished. In a moderate breeze her leeway was small. When the wind blew a gale, and the sail had been reduced to its minimum, the drift of the boat was almost as great as its forward progress.

By the time she had reached the end of the berg, they had drifted so close, the only question was whether they should keep on and trust to luck in scraping past, or tack and stand off, while still at a distance sufficient for the maneuver.

Captain Andrews, who, with all his courage, was extremely cautious, took the latter course, and as he came within some two hundred yards, put his helm about and tried to claw off again.

The moment he did so, the bears, who had been waiting, with the sagacity peculiar to their race, for the boat to get as near as possible, uttered a simultaneous howl in chorus, and all dashed into the water together.

Sammy, who was watching them, uttered a cry in spite of his self-command, for there was a hungry ferocity about their aspect and action that told him they meant business.

They had long, pointed heads, compared with which the blunt noses of the sharks looked benevolent, for the bears appeared far more savage than the sharks.

Their eyes sparkled with rage, and their white teeth gleamed in the light of the sun, as they swam desperately on, howling and yelping all the way.

And, it seemed to Sam, the boat had never been so slow in turning. At the best of times a boat hangs in the wind when its course is suddenly changed, a few seconds, but this time the interval seemed endless, as the bears swam on nearer and nearer.

When at last she filled on the new tack the great brutes were in a confused clump not a hundred feet behind, swimming on with powerful strokes, their long heads half out of the water, all yelping together, their tones getting more and more eager momentarily.

Then began the race on the new tack as the *Dark Secret* began to climb the waves once more, clawing her way to windward as best she might, but at a slow pace, and one all too slow for the pursuers, who were closing in so fast behind them.

For that the bears were coming after them, and them alone, became only too plain in a very few minutes. It was not the boat, but the people in the boat they were hunting, and every time either of the occupants of the *Dark Secret* made a motion they would break out in renewed howls and roars.

The pace at which they swam was also amazing, although in this they differed from each other. In front of all swam a huge bear with a yellowish-white head, and very long teeth. This brute looked the oldest of the party, and his head was as big as a young elephant's. He was so powerful in his strokes that his broad breast was constantly nearly out of the water, and the rest all came in his wake, strung out for many yards.

This old fellow was the nearest, and kept closing in as the dory kept increasing her distance from the berg. But she was not going her fastest yet, and all the time Captain Andrews kept a sharp lookout for the pursuers. At last they had sailed nearly half a mile away from the berg, and the leading bear was within ten yards of the stern of the boat, when Andrews put his helm about, and the dory spun around on her heel and went off with

the wind on her quarter—this time more than twice as fast as before.

In so doing, however, she had to sweep through the midst of the bears, and as they passed the old leader, he made a great effort, and reached the stern of the *Dark Secret* with the end of his sharp muzzle, growling savagely as he did so.

In that moment Sam Short, who had snatched up the boat-hook, with which he had once before beaten off the walrus, sent the keen point of the weapon as near the eye of the bear as he could.

But the old bear was a much uglier customer to dispose of than the stupid walrus. He was as cunning as a fox, and as quick in movement as an antelope or cat.

Just as Sammy thought he was going to put the bear's eye out, the cunning monster evaded the thrust with an active duck of its head, and the point slipped over the hard, snake-like head.

But the very evasion had fended off the attack of the bear on the boat, and, before it could be renewed, the *Dark Secret* had passed Mr. Bruin, and was dashing down past the rest of them on her way to weather the extreme point of the huge berg.

In another moment there was a great roar of rage, and the leading bear, wild with disappointment, had turned and was swimming in a series of leaps through the water, sending half of its body out of the sea at every effort, and coming right up with the boat as if it had been at anchor. Such enormous exertions could not have lasted more than a dozen bounds, but in that dozen they accomplished their object, as a huge paw was laid on the stern of the dory, close to the back of Captain William A. Andrews, as he sat at the helm.

The next moment Sam Short made another jab at the bear with the boat-hook, but the brute caught the iron point in its mouth and began to shake its head. The weapon would have been wrenched out of Sam's hand, but for the fact that the bear had only caught the very tip of the iron, so that the boy managed to wrench it out from between the clinched teeth.

Then Sam gave another jab, this time with better success.

The bear, despising its small antagonist, having one paw on the stern of the boat, and seeing Captain Andrews close to its nose, made another effort to climb aboard, and in the action lowered its head. The next moment Sam drove the boat-hook into the bear's eye, and there was a loud howl of rage and pain as the animal instinctively let go its hold and applied its paw to the bleeding eye.

Then the dory sped on at a pace so rapid that it was soon out of range of the big old bear, and rapidly approaching the ice, through the midst of the scattered heads of the others.

They had all stopped to wait for it, and were swimming slowly to and fro, howling to each other, and watching the dory with greedy eyes as Andrews steered her, taking every advantage of the wind that he could.

They had passed all but the last group at last, when Andrews who had done nothing but steer, called out warningly to Sam:

"It's no use, Sam. Here comes a whole family. This is the last of us, or I'm very much mistaken."

Right in front of the dory five bears, all very large, had gathered themselves into a line, as if determined to prevent the boat from passing without paying toll.

Hitherto Sam had been fighting over Andrew's head, but now he had to beat off assailants from the bows of the boat instead of the stern.

Steadily swept the dory on, and nearer and nearer grew the hungry monsters, while the small boy, like a hero as he was, poised the boat-hook in front, and prepared to do the best he

could in defense of the boat which had rescued him from starvation.

In another moment they sailed right down on the middle bear of the lot, Andrews sending the boat as straight as possible, and aiming to strike the brute on the nose and scare it away.

Suddenly Sammy cried out:

"Give us a torpedo, cap; that'll fix 'em best."

The captain made a dive into the cupboard and sent the boy a torpedo; but there was no match to fire the fuse, and if there had been, the weather was too wet to have lighted it.

Desperate at the danger, Sam caught up the boat-hook again, hardly daring to hope for success when he saw the enormous size of the bear, on which the boat was dashing at full speed.

The great brute had stopped in the water, half erect, every now and then leaping partially up, clawing the air.

The other animals were swimming toward the common center, but slowly and warily, as if they realized the danger of overshooting the mark.

At last they were right on top of the bear, in the water, and Sam made a jab at the floating head.

The bear, with a quick motion, caught the point in its teeth and began to shake it vigorously. This time it had secured a good hold on the boat-hook, and shook to such good purpose, with its enormous strength, that Sam was pitched about at the other end of the staff, like a baby.

But the boy, in his despair, would not let go. Thus it happened that, in another minute, Sam, still clinging to the end of the boat-hook, was thrown high in the air and swept away from the boat, while the other bears, seeing him going, made a great rush for him, all together, roaring savagely.

That movement was the salvation of the *Dark Secret*.

The leading bear, abandoning its first aim for the bow of the boat (which, once seized, all would have been over), tossed the boat-hook to one side by a powerful exertion of its head, with the weight of the body still hanging at the end of the great leverage, and tried to grab Sammy.

To do so it had to let go the boat-hook, expecting the boy to fall into its mouth, but in letting go, the bear abandoned a sure prey. Had it held on, Sam would have held on too, for his blind tenacity was such at the moment that he was hardly sane on the subject.

As it was, he fell into the sea, just beside the quarter of the dory, and Captain Andrews, leaning over as he passed, caught hold of the boy's ragged collar and brought him on board beside him, as the other bears passed by the dory and set up a howl of tremendous rage as they saw their dinner vanishing.

In another moment they had passed the end of the berg, and were rushing away to the south at the rate of ten knots an hour, so that even the fast swimming Arctic bears could not catch the dory.

Once more the self-sacrifice of the waif had saved the *Dark Secret*, and Captain Andrews remarked, as they ran on:

"Sammy, I begin to think you're a mascot, arter all. You bring luck."

CHAPTER X.

THE LOST ISLAND.

The calm weather lasted for several hours, during which Captain Andrews managed to secure an observation of the sun.

To his surprise and joy, he found that he had been driven on the very way he wished to go during the storm, but had come a part of the Atlantic seldom visited by sailing vessels or
ers, and out of the general line of traffic.

The dory sailed on in the afternoon, when a very nice breeze sprung up from the northwest, and just about two hours after noon, all of a sudden Sam called out:

"Land-ho!"

Captain Andrews at the time was dozing over the tiller, being very sleepy after his two nights' watchfulness, but Sam had slept a good deal more than his chief, and consequently was wide awake after the first hours of morning.

His cry waked Andrews, who rubbed his eyes and stared at him in a half-stupid, half-angry fashion, ejaculating:

"What are you talking about, you young fool? Who ever heard of land in this part of the Atlantic Ocean? Why, there ain't nothen nearer than the Azores, Sammy. It's a cloud you've been seein', boy."

"Tain't no cloud," returned Sam, obstinately. "Look for yourself, and see if that ain't land ahead of us, cap."

The captain, fully awake now, took the glass the boy handed him and inspected the place he pointed out.

As Sammy had said, it looked very like land a little distance ahead, and on the starboard bow. How far off, no one could tell, but at first it did not seem more than a few miles.

But was it land or only a cloud?

That was a question which puzzled Captain Andrews more than he liked to admit to the boy.

He knew that clouds very often looked like land for a long time, and inasmuch as the chart showed nothing but open ocean, in that part of the Atlantic, he agreed with it at first, and thought that Sammy must have been mistaken. The only islands in the ocean, on the course on which he was steering, were the Azores, and he knew well that he could not be within a thousand miles of them as yet.

But as plain as daylight, right in front of him, was something that was too solid for a cloud, and that looked amazingly like an island, of no very great size, but still an island.

When they first sighted it, it seemed about five miles off, and round in form like a low bank of cloud. That was what Sam had thought it at first, and it was not till he had gazed at it for some time that he had made his cry and waked up the captain.

Now the *Dark Secret* was sailing rapidly toward this island or cloud, which ever it might be, over a comparatively smooth sea, with her lateen sail spread as far as it would go.

By the time they had gone a few minutes in the direction of this cloud, Captain Andrews began to rub his eyes and mutter to himself all sorts of exclamations about "land in such a place."

For surely it was land, and after they had sailed an hour, toward it, they could see that it was a small, rocky islet, surrounded with a level white beach of sand, planted with trees, and of great beauty, set, as it was, in such a lonely landscape of water.

Over this solitary isle sea-birds were hovering, and even Sam could not help the question:

"Why didn't nobody never find this here island out afore, cap?"

The captain rubbed his eyes again, and took a glance at the sun, as he replied:

"Sammy, I ain't so sure but what we're both dreamin', as it is. It don't seem possible that an island should have been lying here, in the very middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and no one never hear nothen of it all these years. I think we must both be asleep."

"And how are you goin' to settle it, cap?" asked the boy.

"There ain't but one way, Sammy, and that is to go ashore on 'his here island, and stay there for a night. When I've took my

observations from the dry land, and made out just where we are, I'll feel a sight easier."

So saying, he steered the boat straight on for the mysterious isle, and just about six o'clock in the afternoon ran the keel of the *Dark Secret* up on a beach of soft white sand, at the foot of a bank of brown earth and rock, where trees and shrubs were clinging in every crevice, while above them they could hear the songs of birds, which sounded just like canaries in cages, and caused Sam to exclaim, in tones of wonder:

"Cap, cap, I say cap! If there ain't a lot of birds a-flyin' about, for all the world like they was born here and brought up. Lordy! how they do sing."

Indeed, the more they explored, the greater seemed the wonder that such an island should have been lying in the Atlantic Ocean, less than a thousand miles from the coast of America, and no one know it till this small boat blundered on it, after a storm.

However, the captain saw that it was necessary, if he wanted to find the place again at any time, to ascertain its latitude and longitude, and for that reason they dragged the boat upon the beach, threw out the cable, and tied it fast to the trunk of a huge oak tree, which hung out from the top of a low cliff, with its gnarled roots clasping a huge rock, as if to secure itself from being blown out to sea.

The total expanse of the island, as they found after a close examination, was a thousand paces in length, by five hundred in breadth at the broadest part, which was the center, but tapering to a point at one end, and strongly resembling in outline a stranded whale.

The highest part of the island was only about ten feet above the sea, and there were marks that showed that in high tides the waves washed up to the very edge of the grass, on the low cliff-top.

But for all it was so small and lonely, the interior was a miniature fairyland, full of trees and flowers, with wild vines, all loaded with grapes, slowly ripening; with swarms of canary-birds in every tree, fluttering about, and hardly stirring when the strangers came close to them.

"It's plain no one ain't never harmed them, Sammy," the captain remarked, "and you and me, boy, ain't goin' to set the example. They seem to have the island all to themselves, them and the turtles and gulls. I don't believe no human being ever—Jerushy Solomons!"

The last words were extorted from him by suddenly coming on the bleaching bones of a human skeleton, right in the center of, the low island, surrounded by the evidence of a former occupation.

The skeleton was that of a tall man, almost a giant in stature, and the spread of the shoulder bones and ribs showed that he must have been very powerful in build.

Around the bleaching bones, which had evidently been there for a long time, were various evidences of human occupation.

There was the blackened hearth of what had been a fireplace at one time, the remnants of charcoal surviving the storms. A few rags, completely decayed, clung to the bones in places, and a knife, turned to rust, so that it could not longer be picked up, lay beside the body, in the blackened ashes of the fire.

The body lay under an oak tree, which had been draped in a very pretty fashion by a vine, from which the half-ripened grapes hung in red clusters.

At the foot of the tree, and half hidden by the vine, was a small stone hut, the roof fallen to decay, showing that it had long since been abandoned, while the interior contained nothing but a rude stone seat and a sort of bedplace in the corner, formed

by rolling four logs together and filling the inside with dead leaves.

These dead leaves had decayed long before and turned into black mold, from which plants had sprouted, so that what was once a human couch was now a bed of scarlet geraniums and myrtles, with which the island seemed to abound.

Altogether, there was that about the vegetation of the island which made it look as if perpetual summer reigned there, and Sammy was curious enough to ask Captain Andrews about it, when the sailor, pointing to the sea, observed:

"It's all on account of that, Sammy. Didn't ye notice how warm the water was a-gettin' when we came toward it this morning? We're right plum in the middle of the Gulf Stream, now, and this here man what died here must have been a sailor from some ship. Mebbe we kin find out from suthin he may have left."

They hunted all over the hut and at last found the remains of a sailor's chest; the iron straps, that used to be around it, all rusted into nothingness, while the wooden part had rotted into mold. In the midst of this they found the remains of an old Bible, on the title page of which they read, through the stains of age, the letters, "MDCXLVIII."

"Why, Sammy, my boy," said the captain, wonderingly, "that sailor must have had quite an old book about him. That means 1648, and that is an awful long time ago, Sammy."

"Mebbe the man got left here all that time, cap," observed Sam.

"Sho!" returned the other, impatiently; "that can't be possible. It don't seem that a human critter could have been right in the track of all the ships all these years and never found out till now. What's this, Sammy? Jerushy Solomons! Douse my top-lights, if it ain't the man's diary, writ afore he died. Now we'll know all about him, Sam."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAROON.

The paper that had caused Captain Andrews to make such a noise was a book, yellow with age, with brown writing, in places almost illegible from the washing away of the ink in many years of storm.

This book was made of thick, heavy paper, with a very solid binding, and brass clasps, and bore on the side, in gold letters (turned green, in a manner that showed the large quantity of copper in the alloy), the words: "Abraham Daggett."

"That's the name of the pore cuss that owned them bones," the captain remarked, parenthetically. "Now, we'll maybe hear something of what he was, and who left him here, if he didn't git wrecked."

He opened the book, and the first words that stared him in the face, at the top of a page, were these:

"God have mercy on the poor maroon!"

Andrews uttered an exclamation of pity as he looked down at the skeleton, saying:

"Sammy, that pore feller was marooned. No wonder no one never found him. Mebbe they didn't want to find him."

"But what's marooning, cap?" asked the boy.

"I forgot you didn't know much of them things, Sammy. Well, it ain't so many years ago that every one knowed all about the buccaneers, and the many friends they had in every port. When they got down on one of their own men, or sometimes when they took a prisoner, and he didn't want to walk the plank, they used to put them ashore in sich a place as this, and called it marooning."

"Then, do you suppose this man was a bucker—what did ye call it, cap?"

"A buccaneer, Sammy. That was a sort of pirate they used to have in the long time ago. Yes, that man must have been one of 'em, I guess. But we'll know better when we've read what's in this here book."

He began to pore over the writing, which was exceedingly difficult to decipher, owing to the lapse of time, but managed to make out at last about as follows:

The book belonged to the man whose name was printed outside, one Abraham Daggett, who, it appeared, had been the master of the British ship the *Martha and Mary*, of Hull.

Captain Daggett, according to his own story, had always been "a good and God-fearing mariner," who had a letter of marque from his majesty "Charles, by the Grace of God, Second of the name, and King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith," etc., etc.

On this letter of marque, the diary said, he had acquired a large cargo of Spanish doubloons and other treasures, when he incurred the enmity of his mate, one Abiram Johnson, of Hull, on whom the diary invoked all sorts of curses for "marooning his captain."

The diary was dated in the year 1668, and ended abruptly with the words: "God have mercy on the poor maroon!" the same as at the beginning.

It seemed strange to the two solitary voyagers thus to come on a place where they imagined none had ever been before, and to find it already occupied by the traces of man's passioins and misery; but that was all they found on the island. Even the diary gave but little information, beyond the fact that Abraham Daggett had been left there in the month of July, 1668, and that the last entry in the journal was made in October of the next year, showing that he had lived a little over a year on the island.

What he had lived on they found by entries in the diary, which recorded catches of "turtles and fish," with great thankfulness; and at times chronicled periods of starvation till "the fish came around." The writer acknowledged that he had never been able to catch a single bird, and bewailed his want of ingenuity, and the fact that all the cruel mate had left him was "just his clothes and a knife."

Then the sun set, just as they were reading the last words of the diary, and Captain Andrews involuntarily shuddered, as he said to Sam:

"Let us go to the boat, boy. I ain't fond of passing nights alongside of skeletons; and this 'ere man was a bad one, judging from what he left in this book."

They went down to the boat, and found that, while they had been gone, the tide had retreated, leaving the *Dark Secret* high and dry; but Sam noticed that the range between high and low water, around the island, was very small, and Captain Andrews explained it to him by saying:

"The tide-wave ain't very big in the open sea, Sam, 'cause it ain't got nothen to stop it. But you let it come up a narrer inlet, and it'll raise a dust soon enough."

It cost them a good deal of labor to make the boat safe for the night; but they were amply repaid by the pleasant night which they passed after it, sleeping on dry sand, soft as a feather bed, with no fear about anything hurting them.

When the morning sun shone in on them at daylight, Sam was the first to get up, and he was fairly amazed at the noise made by the canary birds in the trees.

It made his adventure seem all the more unreal to have these birds, that he had been accustomed to think of as nothing but toys for wealthy people, flying about as common as sparrows, and

still more numerous, for they seemed to be absolutely without limit, and there was nothing, apparently, to keep down their numbers.

Placed as the island was, out of the track of travel, there it had lain hundreds of years, within fifty miles of the place where steamers were passing, yet unseen, simply because no one happened to have come that way in all that time.

Canary birds had flown there from the Canary Islands, possibly many thousand of years before, blown over by a tempest, and, never being able or willing to leave it, there they had remained, in peace and plenty, till they had filled the whole island, and it was reserved for Captain William A. Andrews to discover this island by mere accident, when the storm drove him out of the regular track.

The captain woke up some time after Sam, and they set to work to cook dinner, taking the last of the ham and beef therefor.

As Sam tossed the bone of the ham into the sea, the captain gave a sort of half sigh, and observed:

"I half wish I'd brought more meat, Sammy. A growin' kid like you eats a big lot of meat, and you want more'n I do."

"Then, why don't we go to work and ketch turtles, cap?" asked the boy. "The book of that bucker-ninny feller tells all about the turtles, and he warn't no better able to ketch them than we are."

"And that's so, too, Sam," the captain replied, "but the thing is to find the turtles, boy; I ain't seed none yet. You see, they only comes to land once a year to lay eggs, and this ain't quite the time, I guess, for them to come."

Sam turned and pointed to the sea, where he had noticed, for some time past, the smooth backs of turtles swimming about, and asked:

"What d'ye call them, then, cap?"

Andrews took a glance at the sea, then picked up his glass and favored them with a still keener look, and finally said:

"Sam, I've said it afore, and I'll say it again, you're a regular mascot—that's what you are. Them's turtles, sure enough, and they're trying to make up their minds to come to shore and lay their eggs, but they see us here, and it skeers them. We've got to git out of this."

They left the boat on the shore, and retired to the shelter of the bushes on the top of the low island, when they hid themselves and waited.

It was not very long before the turtles began to pop up their heads and look curiously at the shore, after which a few swam nearer. In an hour from the time when they saw them, the first turtle landed, scrambled up the beach, and they saw her at work excavating a hole in the sand for her eggs.

Sam was nearly jumping up and running down, but the captain told him that it was important not to disturb them yet at their work, as a single scare might send the whole flock away from the island, while a million eggs could easily be secured by waiting a little.

They watched, and saw the turtles coming on shore, by tens, by hundreds, and finally by thousands, scratching holes in the sand up to the very base of the cliff, and, as soon as they had deposited their eggs, waddling slowly back to sea again.

At last Andrews gave the signal that it was time to act, and said to Sam:

"Now, we don't want very much meat, you and me, Sammy, for we can't eat much, and it don't do for us to disturb the turtles. Between you and me, Sammy, this here island is a fortin in itself, and I've a good mind to stop here for a while, and see if we can't make some money."

Then, as Sam looked wonderingly at him, he added:

"These here turtles is just the kind that has the best shells,

and we can load the *Dark Secret*, and fifty like her, with the best prime market tortoise-shell if we go about it the right way. The fust thing is to turn the turtles. Do jest as you see me do."

They crept over the edge of the cliff, and came up behind the line of turtles, which were now so intent on their work that they did not heed the presence of the two men.

Andrews, going gently forward, took hold of the hind flipper of a turtle, and, with a single heave, turned it over on its back, where it lay sprawling in a most undignified manner, utterly unable to turn back.

Then he and Sam set to work to turn all the turtles they could, and within half an hour from the time they got over the edge of the cliff, had nearly five hundred on their backs, before they frightened the rest of the band, so quietly did they perform their feat.

Then, when they were all safe, Andrews said:

"Now, there is jest one way to git that tortoise shell off them turtles."

"Why, ye've got to kill the critters to git it, ain't ye, cap?"

"No, Sammy; if that were all, then we'd have to waste a sight of meat a-doin' of it. But the plates has to be took off the backs of the turtles, and then let 'em go to raise more. And, to do that, we got to have a fire to heat some irons, and stick 'em at the joints of the plates so as to git 'em loose."

"And why don't we go right to work and do it, cap?"

"That's jest what'll give us away, Sammy, as sure as fate, if we go to lightin' any big fires in this here island on a clear day like this. Why, they'd see the smoke for fifty mile around, and come snoopin' around to see what it is."

Under his orders, they dug a hole in the ground beneath some trees, and constructed a sort of stove, in which a fire could be built that would have a strong draft, and thus create a fierce heat in a very short time. To do this, the captain dug first a pit about two feet deep, which would hold him and Sammy, after which a second hole, about six inches deep and as many across, was dug about a foot from the larger one. Then, by running a pointed stick into the side of the big hole, they soon found the bottom of the little one; and thus, by a little work, made a pipe leading right into the bottom of the small hole, which was shaped like a cup, and meant to hold the fire.

After this they went around the island, picking up sticks. They had no difficulty in finding all they wanted, for the shore and edge of the cliffs were covered with dry driftwood, left there by the high storm tides, and most of the driftwood had been broken up into small fragments, so that chips were plentiful.

The captain selected the driest and smallest of these and started a fire with fragments no larger than matches. Being built under the tree, what little smoke escaped was lost in the branches, but even that was almost imperceptible close by.

After the hole was half full of these tiny sticks, blazing away merrily, red coals began to form, and the captain put on sticks as big as lead pencils broken up small. Bit by bit he fed the fire in this cautious way, till at last a bed of red-hot coals, about the size of the hole, was heaped up, into which the captain thrust the end of a spare boathook, and heated that, and all the spare irons he had, red-hot, for the purpose of removing the shells from the backs of the turtles. It appeared like a cruel process, but really was not, for the shell of the turtle is insensible, like horn, and the searing was done rapidly at the edges of the plates, to curl them up and loosen them. Captain Andrews, who had been on a "turtler" before, did the work, while it was Sam's business to keep the fire going under the tree, and have spare irons heated, ready for the captain when he called for them.

In this way, by the division of labor, the work proceeded with marvelous rapidity till the sun set, when both were too much tired out to do more than throw themselves down on the grass, and fall fast asleep by the dying fire.

That night they slept the sound sleep of exhaustion, and, when the morning came, killed one of the turtles for breakfast, and found that the others, in wriggling about during the night on their backs, had shed their shells all over the beach, and were fit to let go, which they did at once. Then they hastily broiled some turtle steaks, which Sam approved of highly, and devoted the rest of the day to shelling more turtles and turning any that came ashore. In this way, by the evening of June twenty-ninth the energetic pair had shelled a thousand turtles, and then Captain Andrews said:

"Now, Sammy, it's time I went out ter sea ag'in."

CHAPTER XII.

GETTING THE PIES.

"And air you goin' to leave me?" the waif asked, with a trembling voice. "Oh, cap, I didn't think ye'd ha' brought me this fur jest to let me go to starvation again!"

The sailor was greatly affected by the simplicity of the boy, and the obvious affection he had begun to show for his new protector.

"Sammy," he exclaimed, with great energy, "me and you have gone through too much to part from each other; but things has got to be done shipshape and reg'lar. Ye see, folks knows that I sot out to go to Yurrupe, and the only vessel that spoke me arter I'd be'n a week out did so jest ten miles from Cape Cod. Not hearin' from me, they'll all be a jibin' my folks about my goin' to the bottom, and I'm goin' out to speak a schooner, or some one, and tell 'em a long yarn about what's kep' me so clost to the coast all the time. The people'll swallow anything, Sammy, if so be it only comes through a daily newspaper, when they'd look on my true story as all a durned lie. They won't never be made to believe that me and you, Sammy, was in the same boat, and they won't never believe that we found a island. They'll jest call me an old liar, and say you was a fraud. Now, I'm goin' to prove my v'yge, every foot of the way, and keep on speakin' ships and schooners; and what not, and you'll see the durned fools won't never notice how long I keep hangin' around the coast, but lay it all to the boat. We're jest out of the ranges of the New York pilot-boats, and I'm goin' to strike for one of them. Ye know, jest as Borsting and Gloucester schooners is great on beans, so New York schooners is all blazes on pies. They all lies nigh to Fulton Market, and gets the taste from the pie shops there. Now, I'm going to lay fur a pilot-boat, and get a good, square meal of pie for me and you, Sammy, and you've got to keep house while I'm away."

This view of the case was a great encouragement to Sammy, who said:

"Well, cap, as long as yer a-goin' arter pies, I don't mind. Only it'll be orful lonesome arter you're gone. 'Spose ole Dagget should come spookin' 'round, an' me all alone, cap? Why, I'd go ravin', I do believe."

The captain curled his lip, with great disdain, as he replied:

"No, ye wouldn't do no sich things, nuther, Sammy. We don't have spooks in New England. We has reg'lar right-down spirrit rappin's, and all sich, and pays for 'em properly. We don't allow no spooks to come around us without chargin' a dollar a head. Don't go to foolin' me, Sammy, 'cause I know it's all bosh. You ain't no more skeered of spooks than me."

Sammy grinned, and replied:

"I was only coddin' yer, cap."

Then they launched the *Dark Secret* again, after landing most of her stores, and the captain sailed away from the island, leaving the former street arab seated on a rock, munching away at a green turtle steak, and looking the picture of comfort. Sammy had gained seven pounds in the week he had been with William A. Andrews.

About a hundred feet from the shore the captain shouted back:

"Say, Sammy, I'll take ye along, if ye'll do something fur me!"

Instantly the boy jumped up, eagerly asking:

"What is it, cap?"

"Tell me where ye hid yerself when the *Dark Secret* sailed?"

Sammy slowly raised his right hand, with the fingers outspread to their utmost capacity, and placed the extremity of his thumb, with a delicate twirling motion, on the tip of his small nose.

Then, raising the other hand, with a similar motion, he engaged the end of his thumb with the tip of the little finger of his right hand, and worked all ten fingers rapidly in the air.

It was a masonic signal, belonging to the forty-second degree of the Order of the Mystic Shrine, and amazed the captain wonderfully, so that he called back:

"Say, Sammy, where did ye git that from? Who give it to ye?"

The reply of the boy was remarkable for its conciseness:

"Same man as hid me, cap. So long."

And, with that, he turned to his steaks, while the captain, with a very thoughtful air, sailed away, ruminating over the singular signal made by Sammy. In another boy it would have been deemed rude, but in Sammy there was a certain wild and unstudied grace which made everything he did interesting.

It was the last day of June when the captain left the lonely island and sailed all night, with a favorable southeasterly breeze, toward the American coast, into the track of commerce. On the first of July he passed several sails, but did not attempt to go near them. He was looking for a pilot-boat with pies on board. All day long he searched in vain, and began to think he would have to go back to the island without his heart's desire, when, on the second day of July, at about eleven in the morning, a beautiful schooner bore down on him, looking so like a pilot-boat that his heart sank in his shoes when he received the answer to his hail asking her name.

"Schooner *Springbird*, John P. Harvender, master, from Provincetown, Massachusetts; and who in the name of wonder be you, friend? Be you a wrack man?"

"I am Captain William A. Andrews, of the *Dark Secret*," was the proud reply, "bound for Queenstown, when I kin get there, and what I want to know is this: It's gittin' nigh the Fourth of July, and I want to keep it in style. Have you any pies aboard? I hain't had a square meal for three days. I'm sore and stiff with so much sitting. I broke my gaff in a storm, lost my sleep rug, and broke my lantern. Won't ye help a man out for charity, neighbor?"

The captain of the *Springbird* was wonderfully impressed by the pathetic story of William A. Andrews, and, with all the cordiality of a sailor, dived into his steward's pantry, and hunted up all sorts of things, which he handed over the side into the *Dark Secret*.

The end of the matter was that the captain got a new lantern, a blanket for Sammy, and no less than ten pies, among which three were of the kind which the adopted child of his heart craved so much, *i. e.*, the toothsome lemon-cream, which Frenchified folks call *meringue*.

The master of the *Springbird* noticed that Andrews was very anxious to obtain the correct latitude and longitude to compare

with his own, and remarked, as the *Dark Secret* faded away on the horizon:

"That man's got grit, but he's a durned fool to go to sea in a thing like that. It'll be a durned dark secret what becomes of him; and my idee is that nobody won't never know."

In the meantime, Andrews, as soon as he got out of sight of the schooner, shaped his course straight for the lonely island, which he made late on the night of the third of July, as the sun was setting. He did not make a near approach till after dark, for he wanted to be sure that Sammy would not see him; but he was disappointed in finding the boy wide awake, as he ran the boat on the sands about midnight.

He was hailed from the top of the bank by a small, piping voice, which said, quietly:

"I've had supper ready for you, cap, ever so long. Turtle soup, roast canaries, and oh! sich a whoppin' big bluefish you never seed! Come up to old Daggett's place, and we'll git ready fur Independence Day."

"And how do you know it's Independence Day to-morrer?" asked the honest sailor, greatly amazed. "Who told ye?"

"Told meself," was the laconic reply. "Say, cap, don't come the lawyer over me, and stand chinnin' there, but come and git yer supper, afore the things gits cold. Got the pies?"

"You bet I have, Sammy!" was the delighted answer; "and lemon-creams, too, my boy. We'll jest have a bustin' old Fourth, me and you, Sammy."

The boy gave a whoop of delight, and then sobered down, and led the way to the center of the island, in the very place where they had found the skeleton, where Andrews found that the waif, by carrying on the same principle which had enabled them to hide their fire before, had produced a bower of bark, in which he had laid out, on a table of old boards, quite a sumptuous meal of turtle steaks, fish, and, as he had said, roast canary birds.

But what amazed the captain most was something which caused him to roar at the top of his voice:

"Jerushy Solomons, Sammy! Where did you git them silver dishes from? My sakes alive, have ye be'n robbin' a church?"

"No; but I reckon old Daggett used ter, onct on a time," was the tranquil reply of the waif. "Ye see, cap, arter you'd gone, I kinder thought that if that old rip had been a buckerninny, he might have left some stuff behind him, so I went to rummagin' over the bones and things, and all over the island. And at one place I come to a reg'lar brass ring at the foot of a tree, where the ground was worn away, so I knew somethin' was hid there, and I dug her up. And there she is now, cap, with a lot of money, too. Look there!"

He showed to the captain some silver dishes, evidently once part of a church service, of cups and chalice, made of solid silver, on which the ragged waif of the streets had set out their supper.

Captain Andrews, after his first exclamation of surprise, said:

"Sammy, the dishes'll keep; the supper won't. Let's tuck her in."

Which they both proceeded to do, with an appetite which they owed to the sea air, at the close of which Sammy observed:

"Cap, I divided fair with ye about the cigars. I ain't smoked but two a day since ye left; and now I've got down to pipes. What are we goin' to do for the Fourth?"

"Celebrate her, Sammy, as becomes true Americans from Borst-ing. We will eat pie and drink champagne."

Sammy leaped up in amazement, exclaiming:

"Champagne! Where?"

"Aboard the *Dark Secret*," returned the captain, with dignity.

"A man gave me six bottles when I come away, a-purpose to celebrate the day as it oughter be, Sammy."

"But I thought you was temp'rince, cap?" said the boy, wistfully.

"So I am," retorted the captain, tartly, the first occasion on which he had lately shown irritation at his small companion. "It's jest because I am temp'rince that I kept them bottles for the day. If I hadn't been, there wouldn't have been a drop left arter the first week, and the *Dark Secret* would have been dark forever. As it is, Sammy, I am going to get good and stavin' to-morrer, if necessary, and you kin drink Apollinaris, if you want'er."

"But I don't want'er," retorted Sammy. "Say, cap, I didn't think you was mean, but I do believe you're gettin' that way. Six bottles of sham on the old hooker, and never a smell did I get. Never asked me if I had a mouth. Cap, I didn't think it of you—I didn't."

He turned away, deeply affected, and the captain, moved in his turn, cried out, earnestly:

"Sammy, don't say no more, and I'll give ye a hull glassful, all to yerself. A kid like you orter be ashamed to drink like growed men."

"I kin drink you under the table, any day, Cap Andrews," retorted the imp, with still more energy. "Look here, I'll bet you all them silver dishes and tortoise-shell, I kin drink as much as you any day, and never feel it!"

"Well, well, Sammy, we won't quarrel over it," the captain was beginning, and then, as a thought struck him, stopped short, and said, sharply:

"No, I'm durned if I will! Say, Sam, I'll give you half the champagne if you'll tell me where you stowed yourself aboard the *Dark Secret*."

The boy hesitated a moment, and at last, with a shrug of his shoulders, that spoke volumes, said:

"I thought you were a gentleman. You're just as mean as dirt, that's what you air. I won't tell ye. Find out."

And, with that, before the captain could intercept him, he darted out of the shelter and vanished into the night so effectually that Andrews, who saw that he had offended the boy seriously, was unable to find him, and had to go to sleep alone, wondering where Sam Short had hidden himself away.

When he awoke in the morning, the waif was by the side of the fire, coolly turning over some slices of fish in a large silver plate, that had once been used to hold church moneys, which the gracious Sam was now making use of as a frying pan.

The captain was about to protest against it, when Sam showed him the arms of the Pope in the middle of the pan, through the clear gravy, and, as soon as Andrews recognized the crossed keys and other paraphernalia, he observed, resignedly:

"Oh, well, that ain't so bad, arter all. Only don't let it burn up too much, 'cause it spoils it for meltin' when we git home. Sam Short, what with the shells and all that plate we won't have ~~for~~ from ten thousand dollars when we git home."

Sam was about to answer, when the captain noticed him turn pale of a sudden, drop the pan, and run out to stare at the sea.

A sharp-built clipper brig was coming straight for the island; at her masthead floated a jet-black flag.

"Jerushy Solomons!" ejaculated the captain, "if it ain't an old-fashioned pirate, when they said they was all dead! Whatever will we do, Sam Short?"

That was, indeed, the question.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PIRATE BRIG.

The nearer the strange brig approached, the clearer was her piratical character. She was long, low, and of exquisite beauty

of model, strongly resembling the far-famed *Volunteer* in the lines of her hull, while her sails were enormous. The flag, which they had at first taken for black, as the ship drew nearer, however, turned out to be a very dark green, and, as she finally hove to, at about a cable length from the island, Captain Andrews exclaimed:

"Jerushy Solomons! if she ain't Irish!"

For, as the lovely brig rounded to and dropped her anchor, her sails rose to the yards with a swiftness and precision that argued a very well-trained crew, and they could see under her bowsprit the well-known female head on a golden harp, which is known as the emblem of the Emerald Isle the world over.

But what was an Irish brig doing in that part of the world, and who ever heard of an Irish ship before? Certainly not Captain Andrews, who, nevertheless, saw that it was useless to retreat, so he made the best of a bad case, and walked down to the shore to welcome the newcomers.

As he did so, he heard Sam cry out:

"Here, cap, take these! They'll never hurt ye, then."

Turning, he saw that the waif had a champagne bottle in each hand, which he was extending by the neck. The captain never paused to ask how he had found the secret preserve, but took the bottles, and, followed by Sam, similarly armed, went down to the beach, which was now being approached by a handsome gig, pulled by eight sailors, all dressed in Irish green, with gold harps embroidered on their breasts; while, in the stern sheets, sat an exceedingly handsome officer, in a uniform of the same color, heavily laced with gold.

As the boat came to the shore, Captain Andrews made his appearance, with his small aid-de-camp, and, as the bow grated on the sand, called out, holding up his bottles:

"Captin, did you ever hear what the governor of North Carolina said to the governor of South Carolina?"

The handsome officer smiled winningly, as he replied:

"Faith, my jewel, and av I hadn't, I'd know what thim meant without axin'. God save all here, and hooroar for the Irish Republic, and Charles Stewart Parnell, God bless him! Boys, three cheers for the ould dart!"

In another moment, the sailors were on shore, cheering wildly, and Captain Andrews produced from his bosom an American flag, which he wrapped around a bottle, and presented to the captain, saying:

"Captin, if that ain't enough, we've more where she came from. I'm Captain William A. Andrews, of Borsting, and this is the *Dark Secret*."

The handsome officer took the bottle, with a low bow, and, removing his hat, and holding up the bottle, rejoined:

"Captain Andrews, ye're a man afther me own heart. I'm Admiral Florence O'Donoghue, and this is the brig *Erin-Go-Bragh*, flagship of the Irish navy! More power to yer elbow!"

Then, with a comical grimace, he added:

"And did ye think that 'ud go far among me boys on Independence Day? Sure, we've got a whole case in the boat, and we come to our island on purpose to drink confusion to the vile Sassenach and all his crew of Tories. What d'ye say to makin' a day of it, in honor of the ould dart?"

"I'm agreeable if you are," responded Andrews, cheerfully. "At the same time, captain—admiral, I mean—allow me to observe that I discovered this island, and that the Stars and Stripes are hoisted over my camp. It ain't your island; it's mine."

Admiral O'Donoghue shrugged his shoulders, saying:

"We'll not fight about it to-day, captain. At the same time, ye'll allow me obsaive that possession is nine points of the law, and that me men belong to the Invincible wing of the Irish party;

and, av ye don't behave yerself, we'll have to dump ye in the drink, and take the island for ourselves to-morrow, after sunrise. To-day, let us devote the time to celebratin' the occasion."

With a charming smile, he bowed to Captain Andrews, and, raising the bottle to his mouth, bit off the top with one snap of his magnificent teeth, observing as he did so:

"It saves the trouble of corks, ye know. Here's to Charles Stewart Parnell, and the Stars and Stripes, captain!"

Evidently, the men of the *Erin-Go-Bragh* were used to the ways of the admiral, for one of them had a silver cup ready, the moment the neck came off, and not a drop of the precious fluid was wasted.

Captain Andrews, more methodical, twisted the wire from his bottle, and poured out a bumper in another cup, observing:

"When you come to wearin' plates, like I do, admiral, you won't bite the neck off a bottle. Here's to the day we celebrate!"

After that the harmony between the two parties was complete, and the admiral, observing Sam Short, asked, curiously:

"And what's that ye've got, Captain Andrews? Is it wan of the natives, or did yez bring him along?"

Sam saved his protector the trouble of answering by replying for himself:

"I'm Sam Short, the boy stowaway, admiral, and don't you forget it! I kin whip my weight any time; and, if you think you kin spill my captain into the drink to-morrow, all I've got to say is, you're goin' to git sucked in. Here's to the *Dark Secret*, and, when she gets to Queenstown, call me early in the mornin', and I'll show you something."

The Irish admiral seemed to be greatly tickled with the impudent ways of the boy, for he laughed heartily, and asked Sam:

"And when did yez get yer hair cut last, me gossoon? Sure, yez look as if ye'd escaped from a menagerie and lost yer tail in a fire."

The Boston boy was up to him in a moment, with the apt retort:

"Any one cud see you was a greenhorn, only to look at you. Can ye tell me why your brogue is like a cheese, admiral?"

"Faith, an' I can't, me boy! And why is it loike a cheese?"

"Bekase ye cud cut it wid a knife," returned Sam; and, as he spoke, fearing retaliation, the imp skipped out of the reach of the admiral, and darted to the top of the bank, from whence he called down:

"Paddy from Cork went out to swim,

In the beautiful, salt, salt say;

And a whale he swallered him, all but the brogue,

Which sticks out of his mouth to-day."

The admiral colored deeply at the words of the boy, and turned to Andrews, to say, with an injured air:

"Sure, and ye shouldn't let that gossoon be so impident, captain. A dacent man like you ought to larrup the likes of him ivery mornin', to tache him manners."

Sam heard him, and called down:

"I'll take more'n you to teach me manners, admiral! I kin whip the hull face offen you, any time you wanten try it!"

The gasconade was so exaggerated that it made the good-natured admiral laugh, in spite of himself, and he made no more threats against the boy, while Captain Andrews apologetically observed:

"He ain't to blame so much, admiral. He never had no father nor mother, so fur as I know, and he came aboard my boat as a stowaway—and I don't know to this hour where he hid himself, only I found him aboard."

The admiral favored the boy with a meaning look, as he replied:

"Sir, I niver dispute the wor-rd of a gintelman loike you. Any wan can see that he's a 'cluchrechaun.'"

The honest captain stared hard at the admiral, repeating:

"A cluchrechaun! And what in the name of Jerushy Solomons is a cluchrechaun?"

"It's an Oirish fairy, sor, and Oireland's the only place where they has rale live fairies left. Ye'll know them by this peculiarity, that when ye get yer finger on them, sure, they ain't there, just like a flea. But, thin, a cluchrechaun always brings luck to the man that foinds him. Boys, bring out the case, and let's drink a bumper to the cluchrechaun—and may the devil fly away wid him!"

From that moment, Sam was never called anything else by the Irish sailors but the cluchrechaun; and, as soon as the boy found that, no matter what he said or did, no one noticed it, save to observe "well done, cluchrechaun," he ceased his antics, and came into the camp with the rest, while they proceeded to celebrate the day.

A salute was fired by the guns of the brig, and the Stars and Stripes waved side by side with the Golden Harp from the branches of the tallest tree on the island, while dinner was spread with a bountiful profusion that augured well for the prosperity of the first cruiser of the Irish republic.

Captain Andrews brought out his pies in honor of the occasion, and Sam ate so much that he fell asleep after dinner, and did not wake up till the sun was setting.

When he did so, the *Erin-Go-Bragh* was lying tranquilly at anchor in the red glow of the sinking orb of day, and three-fourths of her crew were on shore, dancing and drinking to the music of three fiddlers, who were scraping away for all they were worth.

The case of champagne was succeeded by a second, a third, a fourth, and finally by a barrel of whiskey, on which the men of the Irish cruiser proceeded to enjoy themselves as only true-hearted Irish lads know how.

They brought shillalah ashore, and before midnight half the men were lying around with broken heads, a smile of content on their honest faces, snoring away like good ones.

Then, just as the morning star arose in the east, Captain Andrews came quietly to Sam, and whispered, softly:

"They're all asleep, boy, and now's our time to skip. If they find us here in the mornin', when they've all got headaches, they're sure to suspect us of betraying them. Come, Sam, let's get out of this."

Sam cast a regretful look back at the island, and whispered:

"But what'll we do with the tortoise shell, and the silver, and all the rest of it? It seems hard to leave it all on account of them Micks."

Captain Andrews pinched his arm sharply, whispering back:

"Don't let them hear you call them Micks, or they'll take the skin off both of us."

Then, quietly as sneak thieves, they stole down to the water, and launched the *Dark Secret* once more.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE IRONCLAD.

It was the darkest hour of the night, about an hour before dawn, as the captain and Sam managed to get the *Dark Secret* afloat. They had hard work to do it without making any noise, but the men of the *Erin-Go-Bragh* were so much overcome with

mingling of champagne and whiskey that one might have fired a cannon among them without waking a soul of the party.

At last they got the boat afloat, hoisted the sail, and stood off under a very gentle air from the northwest, under which they soon left the island behind them, and steered away to the eastward.

By the time the sun rose, the island was a speck on the horizon, but the tall masts of the brig could just be seen above the land, and Sam observed to the captain:

"Won't they be finely sold when they want to dump you and me in the drink this morning, cap? Where d'ye s'pose they got all that wine and whiskey from? They seemed to be mighty free with it."

The captain made no answer for some time, till the sun, in rising, had completely hidden the island, when he drew a long breath, and said, in tones that shook with some suppressed emotion:

"Sammy, my boy, we had a wonderful narrow escape from them cusses."

"Why, cap? There warn't no harm in them, was there?" the boy asked.

"Only this, Sam. Them fellows was all Fenians, and every man of them knows all about dynamite and them things, so they could blow us into the air as easy as kiss yer hand. I've heard of the brig afore, Sam."

"Where, cap?"

"Why, every now and then ye hear how some British ship of war gits lost at sea, and never comes back again. Some calls it a wrack, some a fire, but the only sartain thing about it is that she never comes back again, and none of her crew, nuther. Now, the real cause of all them disasters is that 'ere innocent-lookin' brig, which jest sends every British ship she meets to the bottom, after takin' out what she wants for herself. That's where they got all the champagne from. I mistrusted it when I seen the labels of some of the bottles, which had a British coat-of-arms on the seal, and a broad arrow on the side of the bottle. That means British government property. But now we've got safe away from them, and I don't keer so much if we never see that 'ere island again. So long as them dynamiters know all about it, it ain't no fittin' place for quiet folks, like you and me, Sammy."

The captain, steering, had been looking ahead, but Sam, perched in the bow, had been looking astern, and now he interrupted his chief to say, in a low voice:

"Blamed if she ain't comin' arter us, cap!"

Captain William A. Andrews started in his seat, and looked back.

Sure enough, in the light of the rising sun they could see the white top of a square sail, and knew that it must be the brig.

What was to be done? Andrews knew well enough that, however jolly the Irish admiral had been the day before, as long as the whiskey lasted, his temper was likely to be very different next morning, when he found the *Dark Secret* gone.

"Sammy," observed the captain, gravely, "I'm afeared we're in a bad fix if we don't see some more sails soon. That admiral ain't apt to let us go away and tell all about his island, when the British might get hold of it. Best thing we kin do is to haul down our sail, and let him find us if he kin."

With that, down came the sail of the *Dark Secret*, and in another moment she lay on the face of the heaving billows, a mere speck.

The wind had arisen to a fresh gale, and the seas ran about ten feet high, so that there was a fair prospect of the brig passing them unseen if they remained motionless; but, in spite of the good chances they had, they could not help a feeling of grave anxiety as they saw the white speck grow larger and larger, till the top-gallant sails of the brig showed themselves under the royals, and then the topsails, till finally her fore-course rose out of the sea above the dark green hull, and the *Erin-Go-Bragh* was seen rushing along like a race horse.

Almost at the moment when her hull came into sight, however, Sam, who was watching in the other direction, called out to the captain:

"Say, cap, here comes another feller, by gum! Look at him!"

The captain looked in the other direction, and uttered an exclamation of delight, as he recognized the square, trim yards of an approaching ship.

"Jerushy Solomons, Sam! if there ain't a British man-of-war on a cruise, shiver my timbers! Now, we'll see fun, boy, and we

won't keer much which whips. Go it, Irish! Go it, Johnny Bull!"

The captain was so much excited by the near approach of a fight which would not expose him to any harm that he took off his hat and cheered for joy, while Sam took the opportunity to steal a cigar from the box, almost under his nose, and lit it without attracting his attention.

In the meantime, the British man-of-war came fully into sight, and revealed herself as a steam frigate of the largest size, covered with armor, with turrets on her deck, and all the appurtenances of a modern cruiser of the first class.

It seemed perfectly absurd to think that the little, frail brig of less than three hundred tons, with only a few light guns for her broadside, could possibly have any chance against this leviathan of the ocean; but, as the crew of the *Dark Secret* had an excellent opportunity to see the fight, they are able to testify as to what took place on that day.

As soon as the tiny brig saw the huge ironclad, the green flag was hoisted, and a gun fired to windward as a challenge, while the ironclad, which was under steam at the time, coming dead in the wind's eye, simply altered her course a little, and steered straight for the *Erin-Go-Bragh*.

The *Dark Secret*, being so small, was entirely unseen, and lay in the path of the two combatants, as they soon proved to be.

The English ironclad passed first, and so close to the *Dark Secret* that they could see her figurehead, which was in the form of an armed warrior, brandishing a spear in his hand, just about to cast it.

The *Erin-Go-Bragh*, on the other hand, came down right before the wind, under a cloud of canvas, and in this way it seemed as if both captains had made up their minds to run each other down, rather than throw away ammunition.

The British captain evidently recognized his foe, and thought him beneath his notice, while the Irish admiral had a wonderful confidence, born of mystery and success.

The meeting took place within a few cablelengths of the *Dark Secret*, and had a wonderful result.

Just as it seemed as if the huge ironclad was going to run down the tiny brig, the *Erin-Go-Bragh* suddenly wheeled short around on her heel and ran away, when the ironclad fired a point-blank shot from an eighty-ton gun at her foe.

CHAPTER XV.

SPINNING YARNS.

Only one gun it was, but the concussion sounded like a whole broadside, and when the smoke cleared away, such was the accuracy of aim of the gunner that the beautiful brig lay on the water, completely dismantled—both sticks cut off close to the deck.

In another moment the ironclad was almost on top of her, when a wonderful thing occurred.

A white column of water rose in the air, just under the bow of the British ship, a second about halfway down her side, while a third rose astern. The brig had fired three dynamite torpedoes.

These columns rose simultaneously, followed by a dense cloud of smoke and fearful roar.

When they cleared away, the stately ironclad was seen with three gaping holes in her sides, sinking into the bosom of the waters, with such rapidity that it was evident no one could be saved.

But, as she went down, as if determined on revenge, she fired her whole broadside at the Irish cruiser, and in another moment one might see the *Erin-Go-Bragh* sinking in her turn, destroyed by that final broadside. The mortal foes had destroyed each other.

It seemed almost too good to be true, but there lay the *Dark Secret*, in five minutes more, alone on the waves, while of the stately British ironclad and of the lovely Irish cruiser, all that remained was a board or two, floating above their fathomless grave.

"Sammy," the captain said, solemnly, "that settles the thing. I did think that I'd dare tell the folks at home all our adventures when we got to the other side. Now, I see, they wouldn't never believe us. It is a hard thing, my boy, but you'll have to come to it, as I've had to in my day."

"Come to what, cap?" asked the boy, innocently.

"To knowin', when ye tell what ye have seed, that folks won't believe ye, and are callin' ye a liar in their hearts," was the sad reply. "Sammy, my boy, here's me and you, and there was the

Irish cruiser and the British ironclad, not ten minutes ago. Now they're gone. Who sunk 'em? If we tell folks they sunk each other, they'll say we lie. Me and you, Sammy, has got to keep a mighty still tongue in our heads, and tell lies, if we want to be believed. It ain't safe to tell the truth nowadays. Folks is so used to readin' the papers that they don't want the truth. So the next vessel we meet, Sammy, mind you, don't say nothin' about seein' the Irish brig and the British ironclad. I'll spin 'em a yarn that'll be a lie from the word go, and you'll see the fools'll jist believe that, rather'n the truth."

"One comfort, cap," the boy observed, "we won't be afraid to go back to the island again now. Them Irish are all dead, and nobody else don't know nothen about it."

"That shows what a kind Providence watched over me and you, Sam," the captain replied, piously. "What a mercy it was they was all killed together, so no one didn't know us. It's a good ten thousand dollars in our pockets, Sam. It was a great mercy."

"I wonder if they think so?" asked Sam, in a low voice, pointing at the sea, beneath which the British and Irish were alike reposing.

Captain Andrews shrugged his shoulders, as he replied:

"Sammy, it ain't fur us to fly into the face of Providence. They was jist bred up to live by fighting, and they've got what they was bred to. We warn't no sich thing."

Then they said nothing more during the rest of that day, during which they sailed away to the northeast, with a strong breeze, which raised considerable sea, and lasted all night.

On the next morning, Friday, July sixth, 1888, soon after day-break, Sam, who was looking out at the helm, while his captain slept, saw a schooner bearing down on them, and roused Andrews, while he himself went under the half-deck in front, and hid himself in the midst of Apollinaris bottles.

The stranger turned out to be the *Hesper*, pilot boat No. 5, which was cruising after steamships, and had spied the speck on the ocean. The people of the *Hesper* expressed the greatest interest in the *Dark Secret*, and wondered much at finding her still at such a short distance from the American coast. Captain Andrews, to throw them off the scent of the real cause of his delay, gave them a long story about headwinds, fogs, and other trifles, and asked "how far he was from George's Banks."

Being told that he was nearly abreast of them, the gallant captain told the pilot of the *Hesper* that "he had thought as much, on account of seeing so much fog and so many fishing vessels." He acknowledged that his progress had been slow, but laid it all to the headwinds, and expressed a hope of getting to Queenstown all in good time.

Pilot Hooper, of the *Hesper*, asked him if he should not give him anything to eat or drink, but Andrews hastily replied:

"No, no; there ain't nothen you kin do fur me, except to report me in New York. I promised to send notes of all I seed and did; and I ain't had an opportunity to write a letter on account of the stormy weather."

"All right. I'll lie by ye till ye've writ yer letter, and take it to New York, when we git there," the good-natured pilot exclaimed. "I'd do anything for you and the *Dark Secret*, Cap Andrews."

"No, no," Andrews hastily replied. "There ain't no time to do it. I'm on my way to Queenstown, and you've got your biz to attend to. Jest report me in New York, and that's all right."

Then the pilot-boat and the *Dark Secret* parted, and it was not till they were several miles off that Sam crept out of his hole, forward, and said to his chief:

"Cap, this here lying is got to be did more systematical. We got to go back to the island and write a lot of letters, and set 'em afloat in bottles. Then, when we come acrost another schooner, we'll have a better story than you give 'em that time. I began to be afear'd that pilot was a-comin' aboard to find me. And, if ever they git on to the island, cap, there ain't no fortin' for us."

"That's true enough, Sammy," the captain replied, "but, ye see, the trouble is this here. I sot out to take the *Dark Secret* to Yurup; and, if I don't git there, folks'll call me a blower. Ye see, Sammy, here I started on the eighteenth of June, and now it's the sixth of July. That's nigh three weeks, and I hain't got two hundred miles from Cape Cod. Folks'll drop onto suthin' if we don't look sharp, Sammy; and it's a mighty sing'lar thing that island ain't never been seed afore."

Then he said no more during the day, but, as soon as he was safely out of sight of the *Hesper*, set his course for the mysterious

island, which they reached late on the morning of the seventh of July, and at once went ashore.

They found that the Irish cruiser had left many traces of the presence of the crew, in straw from champagne bottles, and other such trifles, but not a drop to drink.

The evening and part of the next day was devoted by the captain to writing letters, which were inclosed in bottles, and which, if ever picked up, will make, when put together, a most curious account of the voyage of the *Dark Secret*.

The captain set sail from the island, alone, on the eighth of July, leaving Sam to take care of things, and set out with the deliberate design of intercepting another vessel, and giving the impression that he had been detained by headwinds so near the coast.

About four o'clock in the afternoon he sighted the schooner *Laura Nelson*, Captain Otto Johnson, to whom he told a most lamentable story of having broken his gaff and lantern, and being in want of all sorts of things, with which the honest sailor supplied him, with the utmost cheerfulness.

On parting from the *Laura Nelson*, he shaped his course for the island, and exhibited his treasures to Sammy, who replied by exhibiting, on his part, package after package of tortoise shell, which he had made up for transport, as soon as they should get a larger vessel to do the carrying.

Captain Andrews only remained there that day, and said to Sam on the next:

"And now, my boy, I've got to leave you, and show myself farther out. Folks can't be fooled forever, and I'm gittin' ashamed of being spoke by schooners for three weeks at a time—and me never clear of George's Banks. I'm a-goin' out straight east now for a good three days, and, if ye never see me again, why, Sammy, you jest stay here till ye see some sail on the horizon. Then you jest light a fire, and, when they come to take you off, make 'em pay you for your tortoise shell."

Sammy made some trouble about allowing his commander to go from him, but, when he found that it was useless to oppose him, simply shook hands, with an air of resignation, and said:

"Very well, cap, you kin go; but jest remember this—if you git drowned, I won't never leave this island. I don't want to go back to the places where every one grudges every one else a bit of grub, if he can't pay for it. Here I kin get all the turtle and canary birds I want for nothen; and in Bohsting I starved for want of money. So, if you don't come back, I won't never leave this place."

And he stood on the shore, wistfully watching the sail of the *Dark Secret* as she stood away to the northeast on her last serious voyage.

Sam watched her till her tiny lateen sail disappeared beneath the horizon, and then turned away, with a sigh, saying to himself, as if addressing another person:

"Sam Short, you won't meet another such a man as the captain in a hurry again. He is what they call a nobleman of nature."

It was noticeable that, as soon as he was alone, the voice of the waif became smoother, his language more grammatical, and that he no longer used the slang with which he had favored the captain. In fact, Sam Short, alone, behaved like a civilized being, and there was something in the expression of his face, as he stood on the bluff, thoughtfully gazing after the boat, that irresistibly impressed the beholder with the fact that he was older than he appeared.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DORY'S LUCK.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, July eleventh, as Pilot A. B. Murphy, Jr., of the good schooner *American*, No. 21, was gazing out to leeward ahead of his vessel, peering for a steamer to take into port, his eyes caught sight, through the dark haze, of a little black speck, which now and then arose to the crest of a wave and vanished again.

At first he regarded it as only a piece of driftwood, but, as he came closer and closer, he perceived, to his intense amazement, that it was a boat no bigger than an ordinary dory, out on the raging Atlantic all alone, with a single man steering from the stern-sheets.

To say that Pilot A. B. Murphy, Jr., was amazed is a word. For a moment or two he was stricken dumb, and cr himself piously, with a muttered:

"Ave Maria gratia plena!"

The honest sailor had been an acolyte in his boyhood, and in times such as this the pious phrases of his childhood recurred to him. He thought he was looking on a marine ghost, a relic of the *Flying Dutchman*, or something of the sort, and the notion naturally called forth a prayer.

But as the schooner drew nearer and nearer to the boat, and he recognized the lateen sail, it came into his mind that the *Dark Secret* had sailed away from Boston on the eighteenth of June, and he said to himself:

"Holy fathers, is that all the distance he's got in nigh one month? Sure, he must have stoppin' places somewhere, or he'd be across, or at the bottom, afore this. I belave his nerve's gone."

The pilot reported to his mates the presence of the boat, and the schooner was heading toward it, firing a musket as they approached, to which the man in the boat replied by waving his hat.

Why they got within hailing distance, Murphy cried out:

"Boat ahoy, what the devil are ye doin' out here? Are ye a castaway, and d'ye want to get home? Where are yez goin'?"

"To Queenstown," was the startling reply, as Captain William A. Andrews smiled back his welcome. "This is the *Dark Secret*, on her way there. Can you tell me how far I am? What is the latitude and longitude?"

"You're in latitude 41 degrees 20 minutes, longitude 64 degrees 12 minutes. About four hundred and thirty-two miles east of New York," was the comforting reply, at which Andrews shook his head gravely, saying:

"I ought to have done better than that, but I haven't any reason to complain, so far as comfort goes. The headwinds, since I started have kept me from covering distance very fast. Well, captain, good-by, and don't forget to report me when you get to New York. I'm Captain William A. Andrews, of the *Dark Secret*, bound to Queenstown, and going to get there."

"And, bedad, ye'll be gray-headed before ye do!" Murphy replied, with the honest frankness of a sailor. "Sure, ye're the slowest man I ever heard of, Captain Andrews, whin it takes yez three weeks to sail four hundred miles. Good luck to yez, anyway, and may yez keep from Davy Jones' locker as long as yez can."

Then the *American* parted from the *Dark Secret*, and Captain Andrews said to him, with a chuckle:

"Four hundred miles out, and no one suspects the island yet. What a sell it will be when they find it out."

Within an hour from the time that the *American* parted from the *Dark Secret*, the haze came on very thick, and the sea got so rough that the stout schooner had to reduce her canvas to a little triangular rag on the mainmast, with a fragment of a jib. Finally, even this proved too severe a trail, and she was compelled to haul down the jib, let go a hundred fathoms of cable, and ride to a drag, made of a spar, which acted as an anchor.

The waves rose far above the tops of her masts, and the wind blew with a severity that made the naked spars groan and tremble.

This hurricane, for such it was, lasted over four hours, and, when it was over, Murphy remarked to one of his friends:

"That's the last of the *Dark Secret*, I'll go bail, boys. Devil the boat was iver built could live through a say like that."

And he went home to report that the *Dark Secret* had gone to the bottom in a storm.

But she had not.

On the morning of the twelfth of July, as the North German Lloyd steamship *Ems* was bowling along, in the early morning watch, with a light northwest breeze, fourth mate Baumann saw a buoy floating on the water, a little ahead of the ship, and called out in German:

"Do you see that buoy? I wonder what it is doing out here? We ought to pick it up—oughtn't we, Fritz?"

Fritz was his companion on the watch, but all he said was:

"The old man wouldn't hear of us stopping for a little thing like that. It's only a bottle, anyway."

"But what is that?" asked Baumann, pointing over the port side of the ship, a little ahead. "On my soul, it looks like a boat! Ha! Look—he has fired a shot!"

And, sure enough, a little puff of smoke was seen to come from the boat, followed, after a short interval, by the tiny crack of a pistol or torpedo, it was difficult to say which.

Mate Baumann ran down to report to his captain, and Captain Jungst soon came on deck, rubbing his eyes, and commanded to bear down on this singular sea-waif. The huge steamer altered her course, and pretty soon came up beside the little cockleshell,

when the captain shouted over the side, in the best English he could command:

"Where vas you going all de viles—hein?"

The man in the strange boat looked up, with a smile, and called back, with perfect tranquillity:

"This craft is the *Dark Secret*, and it's bound for Queenstown. Did you pick up any buoys?"

"No," replied Jungst, amazedly. "Vy, mein freund, you must be grazee. Don't you vant us to take you on poard and pring you to Ny Yarrick?"

"No, of course not," the gallant captain replied. "I'm going to Queenstown in this boat, and don't you forget it!"

Captain Jungst, having come from the other side of the ocean, had not heard of the daring captain or his boat, and he shouted back, in great excitement:

"I tell you, you vas grazee—grazee as von pedpug! Shtop dot poat unt come apoard dis schiff. Mein Gott! it is against de law to commit zoocide! Don't you vos know dot, you grazee esel?"

Captain William A. Andrews merely waved his hand politely.

With that, he drew the sheet of his sail—which had been flapping during their brief conversation—a little aft, to catch the wind, and, as the breeze filled it, the *Dark Secret* moved off from the stately steamer, leaving Captain Jungst shaking his head and muttering to himself, as he watched the tiny craft.

The *Ems* resumed her course, and stood for the great harbor of New York, while the *Dark Secret* pursued her way to the eastward, Captain Andrews saying to himself:

"I have succeeded in throwing them off the trail of the island. I think, pretty effectually. In a little time I can afford to go back, secure of one thing, that no one will hunt me up, as long as I keep out of the regular track of commerce."

And, in the meantime, Sam Short, alone on the island, was turning turtles every day, preparing the shells, and saying to himself, as he anxiously watched the horizon for the well-known white speck which was to announce the *Dark Secret*:

"He shall find that I, too, have not been idle. He took me up, a penniless waif and stowaway, and, instead of throwing me overboard, treated me like a son. He shall not lose by it. William A. Andrews, when you started out you were but a poor man, whose whole worldly wealth was embarked in that cockleshell of a dory. When you go back, it shall be with a fortune that shall place you among the merchant princes of the land. I, Sam Short, the boy stowaway, have sworn it, and I never break my oath."

So the days passed by in glory, and the nights in peace, till the moon approached the full.

Then, one glorious night, when the great silver orb threw a flood of light on the ocean and almost obliterated the stars, as Sam sat on the edge of the bluff, looking out to the eastward, he became sensible of a dull, red glow, that portended a fire, and said to himself:

"A ship is burning! If she is abandoned by her crew, who knows but what the boat may stumble on this island? That would be lucky for them, but unfortunate for our schemes of making money. Hark! What is that? A gun, by heavens! It is a ship in distress!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST REPORT

It was on the morning of Thursday, July twelfth, that Captain Richter, of the North German Lloyd steamship *Saale*, was roused from his sleep by the officer of the watch coming down and informing him that there was a boat in sight, alone on the sea.

"And I think it must be the remains of a wreck, captain," he said.

It was then a little after sunrise, and the captain was very soon on deck, when he beheld a beautiful sight. It was half-past five in the morning, with a perfectly clear sky, and the sun was tipping every wave with gold, so as to dazzle the eyes of the beholder.

There was a fresh breeze from the west, so that the *Saale* had no canvas up, but was plowing her way through by main steam.

The mate handed the captain the glass he had been using, and Richter soon found the object which had attracted the other officer's attention, in a little dot on the face of the ocean, appearing and disappearing behind the waves. Every now and then it was entirely invisible, and then, just as every one thought it had disappeared, the outline of a lateen sail would make its appearance again, as a puff of wind made the boat luff, and the sailor could

see that it was, indeed, a boat, with a small sail, alone on the ocean.

Thinking, as every one else had done, that the boat must have come from some wreck, the steamer turned her course that way, and soon ran up close to the boat, which turned out to be a small dory, with a single occupant.

As the huge steamer came within hailing distance, and stopped her engines, the man in the boat stood up and waved his hat, when Captain Richter called out:

"Vot you do mit dot poat?"

To his intense amazement, the man in the boat called out:

"This is the *Dark Secret*, and I am bound for Queenstown, Ireland. Can you tell me my present latitude and longitude?"

The captain, who was a hasty-tempered man, who spoke with a marked accent when irritated, rapped out, instantly:

"Vat dot you say? Vot for kind of shtuff dot you geef me, you ignorant veller? Hein? Mein Gott in Himmel! you vas a grazee lunatic, unt I takes you unt puts you in irons, shust like von grazee man, eef you no dells trut'. Who you vas, unt vere you cooms from? Hein?"

"I tell you I am Captain William A. Andrews, of Borsting, and this is the *Dark Secret*, bound for Queenstown or bust," replied the mariner, in the same confident style. "Don't you want to give me the latitude and longitude? Well, keep them, if you don't. I can work my own reckonings, or I wouldn't be here to-day."

The captain was too much astonished at the tone adopted by the man in the boat to reply for a moment, but then he managed to say:

"Mein Gott, man! You know vere you is? Hein?"

"That's just what I'm asking you, you dunderheaded Dutch sauerkraut-eater!" rapped out Andrews, angrily. "Don't you want to give me the reckonings, or do you?"

"Oh, I gif you dem reggonings shoost so easy as noddings," the German captain cried out. "You vas in latitude ein unt fiersig, nort', unt dem longshittoods vas drei unt sechsig degree unt swan-sig minuten, vest from dot Kreenvich."

"Oh, talk United States, and give us a rest!" cried Andrews, angrily, from his cockleshell. "What in Heaven's name do you suppose I know about your swanseys and farseys, and all that lingo? I want to know what my latitude is north. I make it 41 degrees 20 minutes."

"Den you vas wrong!" cried the captain, triumphantly. "You vas not unterstant dot nafikation like dem Shermans vot nefer koes to sea mitout dems haves de eddication dot dey vants. You vas shoost dirty—no, I mean near twentee mile out of dot way. Dem latitude vas vat you call 41 degrees 38 minutes. I makes dem latitude meinselluf, unt I knows vat I says, young man."

"All right," Andrews called back, more good-temperedly, and taking down the figures on a slate. "Now for the longitude. You have a better chronometer than mine, and your ship don't bob about like my boat. I make that 63 degrees 51 minutes."

"Unt you vas wrong akain," the captain cried, quite delighted now. "I haf say dot before, unt I say it akain, dere vas no nation like de Sherman, vot hafs dem asdronomee at dems fingers, hein? Dot longitude vos only sixty-dree, twentee, unt dot you can shvear by. Unt now I haf gifen you dot, vat more you want to know, hein?"

"How far do you make it from Sandy Hook, then?" the bold mariner asked. "I want to get my bearings correct, so that I may know just where I am."

"You vas shoost five huntet mile from dot Santy Hook, unt eef you vas come on poart, ve ket you dere de tay after do-morow," the captain replied, restored to good humor by his victory over the other in the matter of navigation.

To his great surprise, Andrews answered:

"Much obliged, but I told you I was going to Queenstown, and that is just the place I'm going to. Good-by, captain; much obliged for your courtesy."

He sat down in his boat, drew the sheet aft, and, as the little ding gathered way, and Richter saw that he was in earnest, he shouted out, at the top of his voice:

"Say, you grazee veller in dot poat, don't you vas vant some-tings to eat all de viles? I geef you some nice schweinfleisch, hein?"

"Don't want any swine's flesh," returned Andrews, contemptuously. "I'm from Borsting, I want you to understand, and I've eat all the beans I want on board."

Then the huge steamer resumed her way. The last they saw

of the *Dark Secret* the white puff of smoke showed that Andrews had fired his signal gun and waved his hat as he went out of sight.

The *Saale* arrived in New York the following day, and her captain, true to his promise, reported her; but as usual in such cases, the daily papers got the thing wrong, and reported the *Dark Secret* as having sailed on the Fourth of July, when, as a matter of fact, she had been already at sea near a month.

As for Captain Andrews, as soon as he was clear of the steamer, and alone on the ocean, he shifted his sail, and stood away to the south, letting go his log-line, and finding that he was making about six knots an hour in that direction.

He kept his course for ten hours, by the watch, and calculated that he had then reached about the latitude he desired, just a little south of the regular track of steamers.

To make sure of this, he kept on until sunset, and then again till the three days' old moon sank, in its turn, into the bosom of the ocean. He had made up his mind that he would not be spoken again, and had to get into a perfectly unfrequented part of the ocean to make sure of getting back to the island in safety.

He was by no means sure of finding it, either, for he had been rather hazy about his latitude and longitude when there. The Irish cruiser had brought such a lot of whiskey and champagne on shore, and he himself had been so nearly overcome by it, that he had but a confused memory of the place; and, when he finally set his course for the west again, he was compelled to acknowledge that he would have a hard time finding the island.

"Huntin' a island, like that 'ere," quoth the honest mariner to himself, "is like huntin' a needle in a waggin load of hay, and the only wonder is I ever stumbled on it as I did. One island's blamed easy to be missed a good many times."

The night of the twelfth was fine, until the moon went down, and, when the wind rose, the clouds rose with it, and hid the stars.

The captain lit his lamp to examine the compass, but was soon warned that this was a dangerous proceeding.

There was but little sea on, but the darkness was great, and the light of the boat could be seen for miles around, by any one who happened to be looking for it.

That there were living beings about who took an interest in that light, he was soon made painfully aware, when a whale broached close to the boat, coming out of the darkness like a ghost but making as much noise as a steamer.

In another moment came a second and a third monster, and the *Dark Secret* was surrounded with huge whales, the smallest of which was at least a dozen times the length of the boat, as it seemed to his excited imagination, while every one seemed penetrated with curiosity to investigate the cause of the light.

In a great hurry Andrews extinguished this, hoping to be rid of his huge companions; but they had caught sight of the boat, and could not be shaken off for some time. They rubbed their great sides against it, as if they thought it one of their own kind, and every now and then one of them would give a sounding slap with its huge tail, not a hundred feet from the boat, which would drench its occupant with spray, and frightened that bold mariner in spite of all his courage.

In fact there never had been a time in all the experience of Captain William A. Andrews, when he had suffered so much as during that night, and when the morning came, and he found himself in the midst of the sea, he had lost all reckoning of his position.

Unable to cast his log for the whales, he had no idea how far he had gone during the night. Owing to the absence of the compass light, he had no idea of the direction in which he had been steering, and only had a general idea that, as the wind had been due west when he saw the whales, and he had held his course steady, he must have sailed due south, the wind being on his star-board beam.

But whether the wind had shifted, and whether he had been correct in his calculations, he knew not.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BURNING SHIP.

In the meantime the tenant of the island, as we must call Sam Short, had been waiting in vain for his friend, when the night came on which he caught the glare of the burning ship in the sky in the midst of the moonlight. Sam had found on the shore, after the sinking of the *Erin-Go-Bragh*, many little things washed to

the beach from the sunken vessels, and among them, as it happened, a copy of the nautical almanac, from which he discovered that the moon came to the full on the 23d of July, and that, at the time he saw the red glare of the burning ship, the said moon wanted three days of being at the full. Consequently, he reasoned with himself that the day of the month must be the 20th, and that his friend and patron, who left the island on the 10th of July, had been gone ten full days, with no tidings heard.

Sam sat and watched the red glare in the sky for several hours, till the glow faded away, just about the time the moon was ready to sink in the west.

He was able then to locate the fire as being nearly east of the island, and wondered what it could be.

While still wondering he became sleepy, and retired to rest in the little hut he had constructed near the place where he had found the skeleton, where he slumbered till the warbling of the canary birds told him that it was dawn. Rising from his humble couch he cast his first glance over the hitherto lonely and silent ocean.

The sun had not yet risen, but the moon had gone down, and a faint light reflected from the stars showed him the horizon all around.

The red glow of the fire had vanished, but a look at the "Dipper" and North Star set him right in the points of the compass, and he turned his gaze to the eastward.

By that time the glow of the coming sun began to flush the horizon in that direction, and right in the midst of the purple flush, he saw the black outline of a sail.

For a while he watched it, and distinguished the familiar triangular outline of a lateen-sail, such as the dory used, from which he augured that the *Dark Secret* was coming back.

The delighted boy began to dance and sing, all alone by himself on the island, and ran down to the shore to be ready to welcome his patron, whom he fully believed to be coming home.

Then, as the light strengthened, and the shape of the boat became plainer, he perceived, to his surprise and a little dismay, that there were two sails in a line, which only showed when the boat happened to yaw from her course.

In short, the coming boat was not the *Dark Secret*, but a stranger.

Then the sun rose out of the sea, and Sam saw the boat plainly not half a mile from the island and heading directly for it.

Half an hour later it rounded to, close to the only landing-place, and he perceived that it had but two occupants, an old man with a very long white beard, and a girl, apparently about ten years old.

The old man wore heavy clothing, as if the weather had been cold, and the girl was attired in a fashion that indicated she had been roused from slumber hurriedly, and wrapped in whatever came the handiest in the emergency.

That they were refugees from the wreck Sam had no doubt; but how came they there, all alone, and what had become of the sailors of the burning ship?

With these questions agitating his mind he went down to the shore to direct the boat to a landing, and his appearance produced an evident disturbance in the minds of the occupants of the strange boat.

The old man, who was steering, said something to the girl and threw the head of the little craft to the wind, allowing her to drift along, while he and the child held a short consultation in low tones.

What they said Sam could not hear; but he called out over the waves, in the rough and ungrammatical style which he had affected with Andrews:

"What's the muss, old man? No one won't hurt ye. Nothen here but birds and turtles, and me. I'm Sam Short, the mysterious Boy Stowaway, goin' to Yurru to claim the estates of my ancestors, I am. Who in the name of sense be you? The Old Man of the Sea, I should say."

His words and personal appearance seemed to reassure the two in the boat, for the old man called back, with a strong foreign accent:

"We would not hurt anybody for de world, sare. Ve are but two poor prisonairs, dat escape from von cruel death. Ve vil come on shore, vid your kind permission."

The way in which the old man spoke was so polite and gentle, so different from the manners of an ordinary sailor, that Sam saw he had made a new and remarkable acquaintance, so he bowed low and cried:

"Come ashore, sir, and welcome. If you like turtle-soup I'll warm up what's left from over night, in the shake of a lamb's tail."

A slight smile lifted the old man's white beard as he heard the quaint salutation, and he drew the sheet of his mainsail aft to catch the wind, and turned the course of the boat toward the island.

Sam, being very much interested in the strangers, helped them by catching hold of the boat as it grated on the sand, and putting his slender strength to the office of hauling her further up.

Then the old man got slowly and stiffly out of the boat, and revealed to Sam the most singular figure he had yet seen in his experience.

The heavy coat of the old man, which he had only vaguely noticed in the boat, turned out to be made of sheepskin, with the wool outside, and came down to his heels like an ulster, while his white locks were surmounted by a cap of the same material. It looked hot enough for the middle of January rather than July. This sheepskin coat was belted around his middle with a coarse woolen sash, and the whole rig was so curious that Sam could not help the remark:

"Say, mister, do the folks in your country all dress like you?"

The old man did not appear offended by the remark, for he laughed and replied:

"Yes, my boy, dey do, ven of von class alone. Dis is vat is called de coat of de mooshik, vich I year, because I come to deir level, dough I vas not born dere. You know vat is a mooshik?"

"No, I don't know what a mooshik is, and what's more, I don't believe there ain't no sich men anywhere," returned Sam, with the charming and breezy frankness he had contracted from long association with the children of civilization called "street Arabs." "Now, look-a-here, dad, don't go to givin' me no fish stories. I'm from Borsting, you know, and we don't swaller chest-nuts fur a cent. What country do you come from?"

"From Russia, my son," replied the old man, placidly. "You have heard of dat country, perhaps, in Boston?"

"Heard of it?" echoed Sam, with great disdain. "Why, in Borsting we know everything, we do. In course, I've heard of it. Do all the Rooshans dress like you?"

"No, my son, only the peasant—vat ve call de mooshiks. Dat is my state at present. I am but a mooshik, von of de poor men of de earth dat only vant a leetle place to lay deir bones, and a mouthful to eat. But I vas not born so. I vas vat you call a preence in my day. A Russian preence. Yes, I have give up a good deal, my son, to be treated like dis."

Sam opened his eyes and mouth together, as he ejaculated.

"A prince! A real prince, with a gold crown and all that? Oh, sho! what are ye givin' us, dad? You ain't no prince, you ain't."

The cheek of the old man reddened slightly as he replied:

"I am very much afraid you are vat dey call leetle vulgar boy. I am not preence now, I say, but I vas-voince. You se de distinction? I vas a preence, and I was a Nihilist. You have heard of Nihilist? Dey vas de men vat make de Czar tr-r-remble on his tr-r-r-one, sare."

And the old man shook his hand in the air with an aspect of lofty enthusiasm, which made Sam look at him with much more respect, as he replied to his outburst:

"No offense, sir. No offense. I didn't mean nothen agin' you. But if you be a Rooshen, how in thunder do you come out here on this island, where there ain't no one but me, and the turtles, and Cap. Andrews, sence the world began?"

The old Nihilist laughed again, as if restored to good humor, as he returned answer:

"Aha. Dat is deerferent. My boy, you did see, perhaps, last night, a great fire on de sea?"

"I did," said Sam with great interest and eagerness. "What of it?"

The old man rubbed his hands gleefully as he replied:

"My boy, I light dat fire myself! Aha! Dey did say to me, 'Preence Oshkinski, you vas a meeserable wretch! You have try to keel de Czar, vat reign over his people by de right Divine. Ve put you on de sheep, and ve send you to live in de citee of Chicago all de rest of your life. Dat is de place vere dey know how to make such men as you behave. Ve send you dere in irons, and give you to de American police, and dey keep an eye on you.'"

"But how was they goin' to get you to Chicago?" asked Sam, with his mouth wide open.

The old Nihilist smiled as he replied:

"Dey send me in a sheep of war, and dey turn me over, as

dey tink, to one man call Pinkertone, in Chicago. Dey say he know how to take care of me. But I feex dem."

"And how?" asked Sam, with his mouth wide open as before.

"I set de sheep on fire meinself last night, und ven dey come to take me to de boat—me and Katinka, here, my grandchild—she vas all in flame from top to bottom. And den I take de leetle dynamite, dat I have save all dat time, and I trow it in de magazine, and de sheep he blow up in de air and knock de sailor dead out of de boat."

"And why didn't it kill you and the kid?" asked Sam.

"Because we are both in de vater vid de life belt on and ve see de boat smash and sink all around, and ven dey vas all dead I take Katinka and ve climb on dis boat and ve sail away like dis till ve come to dis island, and now ve shall all be happy togeder."

"Don't be too sure of that," observed Sam, sententiously. "I see a sail on the horizon now, and if it comes this way a-lookin' for you, old man, you'll catch ginger for what you've done."

The old Nihilist turned around and surveyed the coming sail with the look of a hunted animal, as he cried:

"Great heavens, was I never safe anywhere?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DARK SECRET AGAIN

When Sam Short had taken a good look at the sail he jumped and shouted aloud for joy. It was the *Dark Secret*.

An hour later Captain Andrews had landed and was introduced to the Russian exile and his daughter.

They spent a few days preparing the tortoise shells and then Captain Andrews loaded them in Prince Oshenki's boat.

The next day Sam Short and the two Russians set sail for Bermuda, which the captain's reckoning showed to be only a few hundred miles away, Sam Short being able to steer by compass and stars and take the boat that distance.

Then Captain Andrews himself set sail again on the voyage across the Atlantic, on which he had started so often.

But he was doomed to more hard weather.

The wind had been southeast, gentle and warm; while this cloud rose up in the northwest, sharp and clearly defined.

From the compass he found that he was driving almost due south, and once during the day caught sight of a vessel under a single, close-reefed topsail, lying to, as he flitted past.

That night the clouds lifted higher, so that he could see the horizon all around him, with a pale phosphorescent light coming from the sea itself.

He had been driven, as he began to calculate, many miles to the south, and was getting into low latitudes where the sea is full of live creatures, which make it shine in the dark.

That night as he drove along, half awake, half sleeping, as he sat at the helm, the boat suddenly flashed across another vessel, very little larger than itself, but lying-to at a drag.

The only way that Andrews knew it to be a vessel was by seeing her bow-lights as she rose on the crest of a wave, and he very nearly ran into her, but managed to scrape past without damage.

As he drove by the vessel he saw she was a small sloop, very slimly built, and looking like a yacht; but that was all he could determine.

On board the yacht herself there had been many a look sent over the sea, during the previous day, for the *Dark Secret*; but so heavy was the storm, and so dark the night, that no glimpse was caught of Captain Andrews as, without any light, he flitted past the laboring cutter.

Had he been able to signal her, in that momentary passage, the people of the *Stranger*—for that was the name of the yacht—would never have given at Queenstown the report which they took there, that the *Dark Secret* had "probably foundered."

She was unsinkable without being torn to pieces, and all that night she drove to the south, getting further and further out of her original course, and into lower and lower latitudes.

The third and fourth of August passed without any abatement of the storm, save that the wind became more steady, and the sea less inclined to sweep over the dory. So also with the fifth and sixth, though Andrews managed to snatch a few mouthfuls of food in the stern of the boat, where he sat all alone, half asleep, half awake, during that week of heavy trial.

Several times he thought that he was going down, and had made up his mind to cut loose the buoy, which he had provided for just such times, to convey to others the tidings of his fate.

Only one thing prevented him.

He had not yet made up his mind whether to tell the whole truth about his voyage or to tell a plausible tale, to conceal the existence of Andrews Island, which he wished to leave to Sam Short.

So, for the want of a quiet moment in which to write, and a dry place to write in, Captain Andrews deferred writing till the morning of the sixth of August, when the storm broke as suddenly as it had risen, and he found himself in an open sea, the dark blue of whose waters showed him that he was in the very deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean, while the regular breeze from the northeast, the white cloudlets scudding swiftly across the heavens, and the unusual heat of the sun, when it broke out, told him that he had reached the region of the tropical trade-winds, to which he had been driven by the storm in which he was reported to have foundered.

At the very moment he made this discovery he made two others; both exceedingly interesting.

One was that of a dark line on the horizon, extending for many miles, which he took for land; the other was the sail of a boat, not much bigger than his own, and of a peculiar shape, which he recognized as that of the boat in which he had sent Sam and the old Nihilist, Prince Oshkinsky, off to Bermuda. Now they had drifted together with the *Dark Secret* again in some mysterious way, in the storm; and the gallant mariner's heart swelled with emotion as he said to himself:

"That boy and me are bound to be together, no matter what happens. There must be a fate in it all."

When he first saw the little while sail it was about three miles off, but so low was the *Dark Secret* in the water, that her horizon did not extend far beyond this distance, and the sail looked a good deal further away.

The trade-wind being fresh and steady, Andrews shook out the reefs in his lateen-sail and held his course straight for the other boat, which he reached in about half an hour, to find therein no one but Sam Short and the little Russian girl, Katinka; both looking haggard and pale, as if they had passed through a great deal of hardship.

By that time also he had discovered that the dark line in front, instead of being land, was a vast aggregation of sea-weed, which covered the ocean for miles in every direction, and convinced him that he had been driven by the storm to the borders of the renowned "Mare Sargasso" and "Grassy Sea," which frightened Columbus, four hundred years ago, when making his first voyage to America.

The first question which Andrews put to Sam was:

"Where is the prince?"

The poor boy shook his head mournfully and pointed to Katinka, in whom the question produced a great effect.

The child burst into tears and sobbed forth:

"Oh, captain, captain, if you had only been here it would not have happened. Oh, papa, papa, we shall never see him again."

Then she wept bitterly, and Andrews learned after a while that the boat had nearly perished in a part of the storm which had driven him out of his own course, and that the prince had been swept from the tiller by a great wave which nearly sunk the boat, two days before. The effect produced on the sailor by this narrative, was only to endear Sam to him still more; which was evinced by his saying:

"Sammy, my boy, that settles it. I hain't chick nor child of my own. You two has got to be my children arter this. I'll take care of ye both."

And when Katinka heard him she tried to smile, and said:

"If you had been here it would not have happened, captain. Oh, my poor papa!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A GARDEN IN THE OCEAN.

The two boats, after this strange meeting, continued on their course toward the dark lines of sea-weed, and discovered that they were by no means unbroken.

Broad channels and rivers opened out of the depths of the mass of floating weeds, and into one of these channels the adventurers sailed. Sammy remarking:

"Who knows what we may find in here, cap? Mebbe another island."

"That ain't likely, Sammy," replied the captain. "There ain't nothen but floatin' weeds hereabout, and no one comes here if they kin help themselves."

As he said this they had entered one of the broad channels, and were sailing along through an apparently solid mass of sea-weeds, over which myriads of seabirds were hovering.

Katinka heard the captain's words, and asked:

"Why do they not come here, captain? To me everything is so very beautiful—oh, so lovely!"

The enthusiasm of the child was pardonable, for they seemed to have entered a part of the ocean which was swarming with animal life of all kinds.

The birds were winging their way to and fro over the masses of sea-weed, alighting on it as if it had been dry land; and the people in the boat could see myriads of nests, with the young birds putting out their necks to be fed by the mothers.

In the channel itself fish were sporting, close beside the boat; so close that one might almost have touched them, seeming to have no fear whatever of the strange intruders; while the spouting of whales, and the hoarse bark of sea-lions, showed that the grassy sea was a haven of refuge for more than one species of sea rover.

But Captain Andrews was only thinking of the future, and he replied to Katinka, rather crossly:

"Why don't they come here, child? Why, that's easy enough to see. Who wants to get stuck in the weeds all his life? There ain't nothen but weeds, weeds, weeds, along this way, for hundreds and hundreds of miles. To be sure a man might live here, if he could get fresh water, somehow or other; but——"

"What's that but land?" suddenly interrupted Sammy, pointing to a mound in the midst of the sea-weed, apparently about five miles off, but perceptibly higher than the rest.

Andrews turned that way to look, and answered:

"It ain't nothen at all. If it was an island some one would have found it out long ago——"

"Like they did the other?" asked Sammy, slyly.

"Yes, like they must the other, some day," retorted the captain, sharply, for he felt irritable after his week's loss of sleep. "That ain't no island, and the sooner we git out of these weeds the better it might be for us, Sammy. They might close in on us, if the current happens to change."

"Look ahere, cap," replied Sammy, soothingly, "you're jest dead for sleep, you are; and the sooner you go to sleep the better for you. I'll give ye a tow, and when ye wake up we won't be in this here place any more. Come, what d'ye say?"

Andrews would have objected, but his weariness had become too great to be overcome. He fell asleep over his helm, and for another period of six or eight hours knew nothing of what was going on around him.

When he came to himself at last, he found that the boat was drawn up on shore and that he had been put under the shade of some palm trees, while all around him grew other palms and a profusion of vegetation, that showed him he had been brought to an island in the tropics.

Rousing himself from his slumbers, he beheld Sammy and Katinka at a little distance away bending over a fire, from which came the savory fumes of frying fish.

The captain rose to his feet, rubbing his eyes, and found that the island was in the midst of the Grassy Sea, and could only be distinguished from it by a slight difference of color, save in one place. All around the island the seaweed was piled on the beach, as if it had served as a nucleus on which to accumulate; but there was one channel, looking perfectly black, in its contrast with the rest.

The island was more than a mile broad, and three or four miles long, but perfectly devoid of ricks, being only a sandbank that had been raised above the sea-weed by some means or other and had become covered with palms, bananas, and other tropical vegetation in the course of many years.

The captain surveyed the scene thoughtfully, and finally went up to the fire, where he found Sammy and Katinka just finishing frying a splendid slab of fish, cut from an albacore at least four feet long, the rest of which lay on the beach beside them.

"Sammy," said the Bostonian, "it is an island arter all. Have ye found any water yet?"

"Slathers of it, cap," the youngster replied. "Katinka and me, we dug a hole and the water is jest as fresh as if we was at home. There is the well if ye want to drink, cap. There's rock underneath."

"How do you know that?" asked the captain.

"Dug down and found it," was the reply, as Sammy pointed to a

place at a little distance where a heap of sand had been tossed up around a hole.

Andrews went there to look, and found that the boy had dug a hole about three feet in diameter, and nearly six feet down in the sand, at the bottom of which lay a pool of water, perfectly clear.

The water was so transparent that the bottom was plainly discernible, and Andrews beheld the rugged surface of a rock, with little heaps of sand here and there, while the water was slowly flowing in a thin stream from one corner into the middle of the basin.

The tin cup of the *Dark Secret* lay beside this basin, and Andrews tasted the water and found it perfectly cold and deliciously fresh. Evidently the sand of which the island was composed had been formed, in the course of ages, on the top of a mountain that came up from the bottom of the sea, and only the circumstance that it was in the midst of the Grassy Sea, had hidden it from discovery so long.

The captain became very thoughtful during the meal that followed, and enjoyed the albacore amazingly.

This fish is a member of the same family as our bluefish, but measures from four to six feet in length, and is rarely found out of the tropical regions.

Asking where Sammy got it, he heard the story that the fish had leaped out of the water, in play, upon the seaweed, so far that Sam had conceived the idea of harpooning it before it could wriggle back into the sea. He had made a harpoon of the boat-hook, and succeeded in capturing the creature at the first attempt.

"And there's slathers of them a-doin' the same, all the time," he went on; "and all we have to do is to watch for 'em, cap, and get all the fish we want to eat for the rest of our lives."

He took Andrews down to a place in the island, at the edge of the dark channel, and showed him where it seemed to be a habit of the fish to come to play, and jump out of the water, on the thick beds of seaweed. Frequently they leaped so far that it took them over a minute to find their way back, and a skillful harpooner, by standing on the shore at a certain place, could take them as fast as they jumped, without being observed from the water.

After breakfast Andrews took a walk over the island, being very thoughtful during the time, and saying but little, while Sammy and Katinka seemed to be completely happy at getting out of the boat, and into such a garden of beauty, in the midst of the ocean.

At last, when they had completely explored the island, Andrews surprised the children by asking:

"How would you like to stay here, while I went on to Yurup, quarrelin'?"

Sammy looked at Katinka, and the girl returned the glance with a smile and the observation:

"We never quarrel, Sammy and I. He is a good boy."

"Then this here is what I propose," said the captain. "Ye see, I don't like to leave you children alone on the ocean, now I've found ye; and I don't want to take ye with me, to no other storm. What I propose is to leave you on this island, where ye might live for a hundred years more, and never want for nothen, while I go on and git to Queenstown. How will that suit you?"

Sammy hesitated a minute, and then looked at Katinka. Finally he said, slowly:

"It will be all right as fur as I'm concerned, cap; but this here young lady, ye know, is a princess; and she might want to git back to her own folks, after a while."

"Ah, but you talk foolishly," exclaimed Katinka. "What friend have I, when my grandfather was a Nihilist, and banished from his country? I am content to stay on this island forever, if no way can be found to go from it. All but—all but when winter comes, with the snow. I do not know that I should like that."

"But there won't be no winter, and no snow here, Katinka," said the captain, kindly. "This island lies under the tropic, ye know, and there ain't no winter at all here. You kin bask in the sun, and eat cocoanuts and bananas, all the year round, and no one to pay for it, if you like to do that sort of thing."

Katinka clapped her hands, exclaiming:

"That will be splendid! I like bananas!"

So it was settled that the two children should be left on the island while the captain set forth on his voyage; and on the morning of the eighth of August the *Dark Secret* sailed for Queenstown once more.

It must be confessed that the heart of Captain Andrews was

by no means as light as it had been when he started. The terrible storms had shaken his confidence that he should reach the other side in the little dory.

Sammy and Katinka remained on the island, and saw the white sail disappear over the edge of the horizon, after which they turned to the interior of the island, and set to work to make themselves comfortable; for they knew not how long they might have to stay.

It had been agreed between them and Andrews that the latter was to call for them on his way back to America, if he did not get his boat upset in the meantime.

It was the ambition of Sammy to so occupy his time that, when the captain returned, he should find the island in a position to offer him a dwelling for the rest of his life.

He had confided his design to Katinka, and the two children thought it would be just delightful to surprise Andrews when he came back by showing him a home on the island.

For the first two or three days, however, the pleasure of roaming over the island was too great to be foregone. The children were always making fresh discoveries in the way of vegetation and animals, which might have astonished older people.

All unknown to themselves, they had been driven on an island in the tropics, not a thousand miles from the coast of Africa, due west from the Cape Verd islands, and enjoying a climate of perpetual and enchanting spring.

Cocoa palms seemed to thrive everywhere, and bananas and pineapples grew like weeds. Wild vines, orange trees, guavas, and fruits that neither of the two children had ever seen before, abounded, and such was the abundance everywhere that neither Sammy nor Katinka felt hungry at the end of a day's ramble over the island.

The next day they set to work to build a hut for themselves with driftwood, in which the beach abounded.

Left, as the island was, in the midst of the great sea which is formed by the eddy of the Gulf Stream, the whole driftwood of the Atlantic Ocean came and cast itself on the shore, and they found boards, posts, planks, shingles, and everything they could want, even to nails, if they took the trouble to pull them out of the pieces of wreck that had been thrown ashore.

They dragged wood to the highest part of the island, and planted in the sand, near to the well, posts, to make the four corners of the hut. Sammy turned out to be a pretty fair carpenter, and the boat in which they had come to the island had tools enough aboard to make their task easy.

Inside of a week from the time that Captain Andrews left them, the two refugees had constructed a house about twenty feet square, with a pitched roof, which they thatched with the broad leaves of the cocoa-palm, though the floor was still nothing but white sand. This being accomplished, they smoothed the floor down and began to cover that with cocoa-leaves, and construct all sorts of makeshift articles of furniture—partly from wreckage, partly from the ever-useful cocoa-tree.

At last the house was finished, when Sammy, who had been keeping a record of the days as they passed by, suddenly exclaimed to Katinka one morning as he cast up the notches on a stick:

"Katinka, the captain has been gone more than a month. It is the tenth of September, and he has not made his appearance. What can be the matter? Suppose we go and hunt for him?"

Katinka agreed readily to the idea, and the next morning the two children got into their boat and sailed away down the channel from the island to the open sea outside of the weeds.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SLAVER.

Hardly had the boat in which the two children had embarked cleared the dark line of weeds, when Sammy, who was steering, spied a white sail in the distance, and turned his course toward it. He had no fears at meeting a stranger there, and expected to hear from the people on the strange vessel some tidings of his friend, the captain.

The sail, when first seen, was a long way off, but coming in his direction; and before an hour had passed by he beheld a large three-masted schooner bearing down on him in a manner that indicated that the crew had spied him.

The strange schooner was of the largest size, and, had she been ship-rigged, would have presented an imposing appearance.

As it was she had a sneaking look about her, in spite of measuring nearly a thousand tons burden.

She came down on the boat as if about to run over it, and when Sammy ported his helm just in time to escape being run down, a black man looked over the side, and called out something in a foreign tongue, which the boy did not understand.

Whatever it was, it brought a number of other black faces to the side of the big schooner, and presently she shifted her helm and came up into the wind, close to the boat, where she lay, with her sails shivering, her bowsprit within a few feet of the children.

Then Sammy saw, with great surprise, that the whole of the crew of this strange, three-masted schooner was composed of negroes; the greater part dressed in a sort of sailor's uniform, while a few, who seemed to be officers, were gorgeously arrayed in raiment that glittered in the sun with gold lace and embroidery.

There was a good deal of noise on board this vessel, and the sailors seemed greatly surprised at the sight of the boat so far at sea, for the jabbering in the foreign language was tremendous.

Presently a boat was lowered and came pulling for the other boat, when a gorgeously attired black officer said to Sammy, in the best English he could frame:

"Vat-a you do here? Who you be!"

"Just a little cruisin' party, me and my sister, here," replied the boy, who had agreed with Katinka that she should pass as his sister. "Who be you, mister, please; and what's that schooner?"

The black officer replied with great dignity:

"Dat is de *cruisair* of de Haytien Republique, and her name is de *Liberte Noire*. You are my prisonaire, you and de girl. You vil come and see our captain at vonce."

"But I don't want to see any captain," pleaded Sammy, who began to think he had got into a scrape after all. "Please let us alone, mister."

The black officer frowned angrily, as he retorted:

"Dat is not for you to say. You are de prisonaire, and vil be sold for de slave in de market of Hayti. Ve have turn de table now, and de white man vork for de black. You come wid me."

He made a sign to his men, and the bowman leaned over from where he sat near the bow of Sammy's boat and caught hold of the painter, which he pulled out and fastened to the thwart on which he sat.

Then the big boat pulled away to the *Liberte Noire*, and in a few minutes more Sammy and Katinka found themselves on the quarter deck of the big schooner, in the presence of a handsome young man, with a dark brown complexion, and very gorgeous uniform.

This young man appeared to be the chief, for he gave some orders in the strange language which Sam did not understand, at which the vessel was put about on the other tack, and sailed away, the boat in which the children had been sailing being set adrift, to go where it would.

The children inspected the face and figure of the strange captain with great interest, and not a little fear. They realized that on his disposition depended their future, they being wholly in his power.

He was a handsome man in features, his nose being straight and thin, his eyes very large and luminous, while his lips were by no means as full as those of negroes in general. His uniform was of black velvet, faced with crimson, and loaded with gold lace in every place where it could be put.

This personage inspected the children narrowly, and at last said, in much better English than his officer:

"And how come you here in the middle of the sea in that boat? Was you shipwrecked?"

"No, sir, the ship warn't wrecked exactly," replied Sammy, "but we was out huntin' for the *Dark Secret*."

The words he had used appeared to be unfortunate, for the Haytian captain frowned furiously and exclaimed:

"What do you mean by *Dark Secret*? You mean to reflect on my color. You little white scoundrel, I will have you whipped for that."

"I didn't mean nothen," stammered Sam, who saw that he had made a mistake in something or other. "I meant the boat *Dark Secret*, Cap. Bill Andrews, sir. Ain't you seed her? Thought every one knowed she was tryin' to cross the ocean to Queens-town. Hain't ye seen her, cap?"

The black captain appeared to be mollified by the explanation, for he replied, more placably:

"Well, that is all right then. No, I have not seen the man. Do you know who I am, and what is going to be done with you, boy?"

Sammy shook his head, and Katinka drew a little closer to him, and took his hand, as if to comfort him, as the black captain said:

"I am Captain the Marquis of Marmalade, commanding the cruiser *Black Liberty*, of the Haytian Republic, and my orders are to take all the white prisoners that I can catch and bring them home to Hayti, to be sold as slaves in the interior. You two will make excellent slaves for my personal use. Can you clean boots, young man?"

Sammy hesitated a moment, and the captain, observing it, said:

"That is well. Whether you have ever done it before or not, you shall learn to do it now. I appoint you my chief bootblack, and the young girl shall wait on my wife, who is downstairs in the cabin. If you make any mistakes about the boots it will be the worse for you, my boy, for we black men remember well the way you used to give it to us when our fathers were slaves."

Then holding up a formidable-looking whip, he added:

"There is nothing like the lash to bring a white man to obedience, and make him behave himself. Do you not agree with me, white boy?"

Sam trembled with indignation, but realized that it would not do to show what he felt. Captain Andrews was no longer there to protect him, and the brown captain added, smilingly:

"The whip is the best of all teachers."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HAYTIAN.

Poor Sam Short and Katinka had no resort but submission to the whims of their black captors, and their condition soon became very miserable.

The *Black Liberty* turned out to be a vessel of a character that Sam had never dreamed of as a possibility before; a black slaver on the hunt for white slaves. She sailed away from the Saragossa Sea, and stretched off to the north for several days, avoiding large ships, but always coming up to any small craft that could be found. These vessels, whether fishing boats, traders or what not, were always scuttled, and their crews seized and thrown into the hold of the big schooner, where they were ironed to the ribs of the *Black Liberty*, in the same way in which black slaves were formerly ironed down in the holds of slavers.

Sam Short was kept in the cabin to black the captain's boots, wait on the table, and obey every order of the black steward, who gave him cuffs and kicks on the slightest provocation. Katinka, more happy, was sent to the stern cabin, to wait on the wife of the captain—a brown lady with very handsome features, who rejoiced in the name of the Marchioness of Marmalade. The poor child occasionally saw Sam and confided to him that she was "not very unhappy; but madam pulls my hair for the least thing."

So the cruise of the *Black Liberty* continued for some days, till the 11th of August, when Sam saw the smoke of a steamer, and listened from his place in the steward's pantry below, to what might take place when the schooner spoke her.

The port on that side of the vessel opened on the approaching steamer, and Sam heard the following conversation:

"What schooner is that?"

"The *Liberte Noire*, from Hayti. What steamer is that?"

"The *Bulgaria*, from Liverpool to New York. Saw the *Dark Secret* yesterday. The crazy Yankee seems to think he is going to get to Queenstown after all, though he isn't half way across yet."

Sam felt his heart beating hard at this news of his beloved commander, and listened intently for what Marmalade would say.

The brown captain asked several questions as to the place where the boat had been seen, and as soon as the steamer parted company from the *Black Liberty*, the marquis shouted to Sam:

"Ho, you little white dog, where are you? Come here, or I'll take the skin off you."

Sam knew better than to disobey, and the brown marquis asked him:

"Do you know this Captain Andrews well? You told me you had been in his boat. Is he a navigator? I mean, can he read the stars, and find his place on the sea thereby?"

Sam hesitated a little, and finally said:

"I think the captain knows how to find his place by the stars,

sir; but I think he prefers taking it from the steamers, as they pass him, because it is less work."

The Marquis of Marmalade smiled significantly, as he said:

"Then I shall have to make him do a little work, when I catch him. I am tired of being the only man on board who can work an altitude. I am going to catch your captain, Sam."

The course of the schooner was altered, and on the next morning Sam, looking over the rail, as he came from the galley with some dishes for the captain's breakfast, spied the *Dark Secret* dead ahead.

The heart of the captive boy thrilled with excitement. He knew that his old friend would be made a captive, but he also knew that the inventive mind of the Bostonian, once on board, would not fail to devise a means of escape.

Therefore he hastened to the captain's cabin at once, and found the black mate reporting the fact of the boat being in sight to the captain. Marmalade looked pleased, and called up to Sam:

"Now, little white dog, I want you to save me some trouble. I want your captain as a servant, but I wish him to be a cheerful one, or he will be no use. If you can persuade him to serve me properly you shall be treated well, and so shall he; if you hesitate, I will have you whipped soundly, and he shall be sold as a slave in the mines of Hayti, where no free white men are allowed. Now what do you say?"

Sam had been thinking quickly, and the moment the brown marquis finished he replied:

"If you will let me speak with the captain, sir, I'll engage that he shall be glad to serve you faithfully, and take all your observations for you, so as to save you all trouble."

"All right," returned the brown captain, rather scornfully. "I'll trust you, my boy, just because if you try to deceive me I shall take the skin off you at once. Go and induce your captain to surrender."

Sam went on deck and found the schooner within a few hundred fathoms of the *Dark Secret*, which looked as if the owner had had a hard time. The wind was blowing heavily, and while the big three-masted schooner was reduced to a jib and mainsail, close-reefed, the *Dark Secret* had to ride to a drag, being unable to stand the heavy seas otherwise. The schooner ran down to the boat, and Sam, standing by the heel of the bowsprit, hailed his former chief, crying:

"Cap, cap, here I am, and Katinka, too. Come aboard!"

Captain Andrews looked greatly surprised, but answered at once:

"You know, boy, I can't come aboard without leaving some one in the boat. What schooner is that, and how did you come there?"

Sam answered at once:

"It is the Haytian cruiser *Black Liberty*, and I have a special invitation from the captain for you to come aboard."

"Will you take charge of the *Dark Secret* while I come?" asked the unsuspecting Andrews.

"Certainly I will," was the reply.

Five minutes later Captain William A. Andrews, entirely unsuspecting of the plot made against him, stood on the deck of the *Black Liberty*, staring around him in great surprise at the black faces, when the Marquis of Marmalade suddenly emerged from the cabin, and said, with a very polite bow:

"Sare, you are my prisonaire. Dis is de cruiser *Liberte Noire*, of Hayti, and we are cruising after slaves. You are my slave henceforth, and I expect you to navigate my schooner for me, on penalty of being flogged if you make a mistake."

Andrews had turned red and white alternately during the speech of the brown captain; but at the last words he started back, and cried:

"Flog me!—me, a white man?"

Marmalade laughed aloud, and cried:

"Hark to this fellow talking of his white blood. Seize him, men, and tie him to the mast."

And in another moment the black sailors, who had been lying in wait for just such a chance, had seized the gallant Bostonian; when Sam Short, who had been watching the whole affair, suddenly ran to his chief and cried, earnestly:

"Give it to 'em, cap, give it to 'em. It's your only chance."

And he managed to whisper in his ear the additional words:

"We kin whip 'em if we fool 'em. The captain drinks."

When it is a question of diplomacy, there is no place in the world like Boston. Two men from any other city in the world could not have understood each other so quickly as did Sam and

the captain in that brief moment. Even while the black men were carrying him bodily to the mast to be subjected to a degrading punishment, Andrews cried:

"I'll navigate the schooner, cap, and be glad to do it. I'm tired of being alone in that boat."

"Aha!" cried Marmalade, with a triumphant laugh, "we have brought you to your senses, have we? Then come down to the cabin."

He resumed his polite demeanor as he spoke, and proceeded Andrews into the cabin, where the Bostonian found a very handsome brown lady, dressed in scarlet and yellow silk, with a profusion of ornaments.

She regarded Andrews very closely, and he, struck by the beauty of this bronze Venus, returned the gaze so earnestly, that Marmalade rapped on the table, and said, sternly:

"White dog, look this way, or I'll have you whipped."

Andrews did not even flush this time. He had regained that complete control of his features which is peculiar to a Bostonian, and merely shrugged his shoulders and asked:

"Well, captain, what am I to do?"

The marquis shoved him over a sheet of paper, and pointing to some figures thereon, said:

"There are the figures of the altitude I took to-day at noon, and there is the almanac. Work the latitude and longitude, and remember the result will decide your future in this schooner. Make a mistake and you will be taken to the mines in Hayti, where no white man goes free, and kept there till you die. Succeed, and I will make you navigator of this schooner, and you shall live in the cabin. Go to work."

With that he left the cabin, and Andrews began his work in the style of a man who understood it, while the brown marchioness watched him furtively till he had finished.

When he at last looked up he had made his calculations, and had pricked the place of the schooner on the chart, and the marchioness said in a soft voice:

"You half find de place, sare?"

Andrews could not help a smile, as he replied:

"Why, yes, madam; that is easy enough."

"Oh, sare," she said, suddenly, in a low voice, glancing apprehensively at the door, "you are capable of navigating dis schooner. Vat you say to be captain yourself?"

She whispered the last words, and Andrews, starting, realized that she meant what she said, as she continued in a still lower whisper, glancing at the door all the time:

"Hush! he vil keel us if he find out. He is a tereble man, and he make all the vite man slave. My fader was vite man, and I lofe de vite. Ve sall half a rising, and you sall be captain. I am tire of living wid black man all de time. I crave a shange. Hush! de boy shall tell de rest at night."

With that she turned away her head and busied herself in a book as the brown captain entered the cabin from the deck entirely unsuspecting of what was going on. The brown lady had turned against the brown gentleman.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RISING.

From that moment Captain William A. Andrews felt that he had come to the mouth of a volcano, which might burst at any time. His work at the reckoning of the schooner pleased the marquis so well, that the Bostonian received complete control of the instruments, and soon found the reason for the eagerness of the brown captain to be relieved from the trouble.

The Marquis of Marmalade was the only brown man on board capable of taking an observation, and he was excessively fond of drinking. He had enough common sense to know that, if he got drunk, he could not keep his schooner from shipwreck, and he had therefore seized on Andrews to do that portion of the work, so that he might get drunk as much as he pleased.

The very next day he and all the crew of the *Black Liberty* began to drink, and by the end of the day got so drunk that the guidance of the schooner was left to Andrews and Sam, while the black men danced and sung, and howled themselves hoarse over a rum barrel.

In the meantime the prisoners in the hold were miserably treated and neglected by the black sailors, till next day the brown captain said to Andrews, with a drunken leer:

"I am going to make you white dogs take care of your friends

now. My men tell me that they cannot stand the bad smell of these white prisoners in the hold, and have struck against taking them down any more food and drink. You don't mind the bad smell, because you have it yourselves. It is a curious thing how white men never know how badly they smell till we tell them. Come, now, you and your children there can go down hereafter and feed the white slaves till we get to Hayti. I want them all fat and hearty."

Sam and the captain did as they were told, and found the prisoners in the hold in a shocking condition, and hungry for revenge. They were composed of English, French, Spanish and Italian seamen, from all sorts of craft, who had been snapped up by the schooner and confined in filth and hunger, till they were ready to die.

Assured that there was a chance of a rising, they agreed to obey the signal whenever it should be given. Thus matters went on till the morning of the fifteenth of August, when the Marchioness of Marmalade came to Andrews as he sat in the cabin working the reckoning, and said to him, in a low voice:

"Tho hour has come. You shall kill this brown man, and I will make you king of the sea. Take this."

She handed him a key and continued hurriedly:

"Dat vill unlock de irons of de mans in the hold. Marmalade vill be dronk, and all vill be dronk. I half put de stuff in deir liquor. De arms of de guard are in de rack by de mast, and de rest you must do for yourself. Dat is all."

With that she vanished in her own cabin, and the rest of that day was devoted by Sam and the captain to carrying out their plots.

How they succeeded could be judged by what took place that evening at sunset.

The Marquis of Marmalade, as drunk as a lord, was sitting by the cabin table, with his head resting on his arms, fast asleep, when the marchioness rushed in and shook him, screaming excitedly:

"Alphonse, Alphonse, the prisoners are rising!"

She did it as a test of his slumber, and the test was decisive. The drunken man only rolled his head from side to side on his arms, and growled, sullenly:

"Lea' me 'lone. Ge' out!"

After which he composed himself again to slumber.

Then she turned and nodded to Andrews, saying:

"The time has come. Do your work."

Ten minutes later all the prisoners in the hold were released and armed, while the drunken sailors of the schooner, sleeping off their debauch in all sorts of places, were ironed without the least trouble, and control of the *Liberte Noire* had changed hands.

The captain himself, as he lay there in a drunken stupor, was handcuffed and chained to his chair; and then Captain Andrews took his place in the cabin, having assigned the rescued prisoners to different watches, and said to the brown marchioness:

"Now, madam, we owe you our liberty. Tell us what you wish us to do. This vessel is a pirate in reality, and if we take it into any civilized port the black men will all be hung. Do you wish that?"

"No," she said, with a peculiar smile at the captain, which he did not at first understand. "You do not see vat I mean. If dey had taken you to Hayti dey vould haf land you in a dark night, and sell you into de interior to work in de mine and on de sugar plantation. Now you haf dem. Vy not sell dem yourself, and make de money? Den ve roam de sea, and you be king and I be queen."

The worthy captain was so much surprised and shocked at the cool depravity of this beautiful bronze lady that for a few moments he could hardly speak. When he got his breath, he remarked:

"But black slavery is abolished, marchioness. We cannot sell these black men if we wished to. Besides, there is another thing to consider. We have no right to do it. We should become pretty fair imitations of pirates ourselves. On the whole, the best thing we can do is to carry this schooner into the nearest port and have her condemned as a pirate and sold for the benefit of the prisoners, who have lost their different vessels."

The brown lady instantly flew into a terrible rage and accused the captain of betraying her. He owed his life and liberty to

her, she said, and she was determined not to let go the chance of so much money. There were plenty of countries left yet where they kept slaves, and she was going to one of them. If the captain did not like it, one of the prisoners might be more accommodating.

And with that she began to use her eyes on the other men with such good effect that, by the evening of the next day, they came to Andrews in a body and told him that they had made up their minds to turn pirates and make the brown lady their queen. If the honest captain did not like it he could lump it; but if he behaved himself he might be captain and navigate the schooner.

This the captain positively refused to do, and inasmuch as there was no one else on board the schooner who could navigate except the brown Marmalade, who was now in irons and thirsty for revenge, a compromise finally was agreed to.

Andrews agreed that if the men who had seized the schooner would permit him to land the children on the island from which they had been taken, and turn himself again afloat in the *Dark Secret*, he would agree, on his part, never to betray the name and identity of the schooner, and would permit them to pursue their career in any way they pleased. This they finally agreed to, and turned the head of the schooner toward the island of palms in the Saragossa Sea.

On the morning of the next day the *Black Liberty* sailed away from Palm Island, leaving the children there, in the house in which they had promised to wait for Captain William A. Andrews.

The worthy captain landed with the children, and as the sails of the schooner disappeared on the horizon, he said to Sam: "Now, my boy, we are safe for the present. I took care not to give the people on that schooner the true latitude and longitude, and as soon as they are fairly out of sight, they will have lost us for good. We hold the secret of two islands in the ocean, of which no one else knows, and the question now will be how to use the knowledge for your benefit. I have determined to adopt you two children for my own, and come and live with you, on this island, for the rest of my life; but there are many things to get before we can be comfortable. To get those things I have to return to America, and I am going to do it for your sakes."

The children listened with much interest, and Sam asked:

"What! Do you mean that you are going to give up your voyage to Europe, in the *Dark Secret*?"

"Sammy, I am," was the grave reply.

Then seeing that the children did not fully understand what he was doing, he added:

"It's a hard thing to do, to give up this voyage, Sammy. If I only get to the other side—and there ain't a doubt but what I can do it, if I stick to it long enough—my fortune is made. There ain't a hall in London would hold the crowds that would come to hear me lecture. The man that crosses the Atlantic in a twelve-foot dory ain't to be duplicated, and his fortune is made. All this fortune I am going to give up, just for your sake, Sammy and Katinka."

"And why?" asked Katinka, staring at him with her big, dark eyes, in her innocent, childish fashion.

"Just to be able to get back home, and start afresh, with things to make a regular steady settlement on this island," the captain replied. "If I keep on the way to Yurruup, it'll be six weeks more at least, before I get there, and I won't be able to get out of the lecturing engagement. I've made up my mind what to do."

"And what is it?" asked Sam.

"I'm going to put out into the tracks of ships, and make to

be picked up by the first vessel that's going to New York," was the reply. "I won't go to the other side in anything but the *Dark Secret*; but I'll go back with her, and make everybody think I've given up the idea of getting to Yurruup in her. Then, when they've all forgotten all about me and my boat, I'll load up, and come to you, children, with all the things we want for a steady settlement, and we'll live here for the rest of our lives. What do you say to that?"

What could they say, but thank the self-sacrificing mariner for his words, and promise to wait for him till he came back. The rest of the day, after the schooner had disappeared, was devoted to making the house on Palm Island habitable and comfortable, and then the *Dark Secret* spread her sail once more, and stretched away to the northeast. As the island faded from sight the gallant captain heaved a sigh and remarked:

"Adieu to fame for another year. But I shall have two devoted children, instead of fame, and need not complain."

It was on Friday, August 17th, that the *Dark Secret* left the hidden island of palms, and on the 18th and 19th the sea was smooth and pleasant, with a stiff breeze from the northwest, under which the boat ran merrily along.

The captain had set out his drag as usual for the night of the 18th, running only in the day-time, and practically being at anchor in the darkness; only subject to a little drift.

He woke up unrefreshed, for he had been disturbed a good deal during the night by the sounds of some great fish striking against the bottom of the boat.

Once or twice they had nearly upset him, and he had been obliged to get up time and again to scare them off, besides pumping.

For, since leaving the island, the *Dark Secret* had begun to leak heavily, so that the captain frequently was roused from sleep by the water coming through his cork mattress, and compelling him to pump.

That morning he met a heavy surf, and saw a number of sharks, but ran on till about noon, when he sighted a large bark, running westward; and at once fired a salute to attract her attention.

It happened that the bark was a Norwegian, named the *Nor*, under command of Captain Bjornsen, bound from a Norwegian port called Aarhus, to New York, in ballast, carrying nothing but empty petroleum barrels, to be filled in America, and her commander, Captain Bjornsen, gladly took Captain Andrews on board.

He had failed in his great undertaking of crossing the Atlantic in his boat, but he had gained something that was worth far more than the empty glory of doing something no one else ever did.

He had found two children, with whom he knew a happy old age could be secured; and he had discovered two islands, which, if he could but keep the rest of the world from knowing their exact locality, might be made into perfect paradises of rest for any poor man who wished to live alone.

THE END.

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